

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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SERGIO LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT SKY IN SAUDI ARABIA

The Mexican leads home another Red Bull rout in F1 p4



Legendary Frenchman plays down speculation of more events after 100% start in 2023

RECORD-BREAKER OGIER TAKES LEAD DESPITE PART-TIME DRIVE



Ogier powered into history—again



Landais (l) and winner Ogier were all smiles

By Graham Lister

Sebastien Ogier broke the Rally Mexico win record with victory number seven on Sunday – then played down the prospects of equalling Sebastien Loeb in terms of World titles won.

Ogier's second victory from as many starts this season has put him three points to the good in the championship chase heading to next month's Croatia Rally, where he will have the advantage of starting first on the road in his factory Toyota.

But the 39-year-old continues to insist that he's only planning a half-season campaign and that eight WRC titles is enough. "I was not necessarily going for five points [by being quickest on the final Powerstage] but I know I am going to take part in the next round on Tarmac and the starting position is good," Ogier said. "I am here for myself to enjoy and have fun but also to give the maximum points to Toyota."

Full report, page 14-15

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READERS' Q&A

CHRIS INGRAM IN THE Q&A SPOTLIGHT

European champ tackles the MN questions, p18



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COMMENT

Photo: Colin Casserley, Motorsport Images, Red Bull Content Pool, Toyota Gazoo Racing, Jakob Ebrey



Frenchman Ogier was in magical form in Mexico to take his 57th World Rally victory

OGIER SHOWS WHY EXPERIENCE PAYS

Sebastien Ogier dismissed records as merely numbers and said they were “nice” after claiming a history-making seventh victory in Mexico on last weekend’s third round of the World Rally Championship. The Toyota Gazoo Racing man claimed the lead on Saturday morning and used his experience and guile to land the silverware for his Japanese paymaster.

It was an excellent performance (albeit helped when Esapekka Lappi careered off the road in his Hyundai) and it was enough for Ogier to sit neatly atop the World Rally Championship drivers’ table by three points. While that is a mark of the man, it surely sends shivers down the spines of his rivals who are in for the entire 13-round season and already trailing in the wake of the driver who has done 33% fewer stages than them.

Ogier says he will not be tempted into a full-time return as he wants to occupy his life with different challenges. He has been in the WRC since his maiden outing in 2008 and you could understand that he might want a less pressured season. However, the tantalising truth is that Ogier is just one crown short of standing shoulder to shoulder with Sebastien Loeb at the top of the list of all-time champions in the mixed-surface sport. That might be a lure to tempt him out in more rounds. While it would be something the fans would love, but something his rivals would fear. And that number would be more than “nice...”

There was a fear that the result of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix would be under a cloud as officials decided whether Fernando Alonso had broken pitstop rules in Jeddah. In the end, the Aston Martin driver was restored to third place – behind the rampaging Red Bulls of Sergio Perez and Max Verstappen – and that was a good thing. Rules are there for a reason, but when the minutiae threatens to derail what the casual fan has seen on the TV, it seems the sport is shooting itself in the foot. Thankfully, sense prevailed.

In this issue, the incumbent of our readers’ questions and answer hot seat is Chris Ingram, the WRC2 battler and the 2019 European Rally champion. The Mancunian has seemed destined for the top since he took his first steps into rallying aged 15, and he has overcome the many obstacles that have been put in his way to reach the top. The feature starts on page 18.

Also in this edition, we include the last of our calendars, the Sporting Scene line-up. It picks out some of the thrills that can be found away from the stages and race tracks, and if you aren’t used to going, make a point of attending at least one of the events listed on p16-17. You will be pleasantly surprised.

Matt James

Editor, Motorsport News
matt.james@kelsey.co.uk



MOTORSPORT NEWS

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DRIVER COLUMN: F1 Academy recruit Abbi Pulling

FORMULA 1 REPORT: SAUDI ARABIA

Photos: Motorsport Images, Red Bull Content Pool



Mexican wave:
Red Bull winner



Perez picked up his fifth career victory and his fourth for Red Bull Racing

PEREZ PICKS UP WHERE VERSTAPPEN HAD LEFT OFF

It was a convoluted route to another Red Bull 1-2 in Saudi Arabia. By **James Roberts**



Alonso once again showed good pace on the way to P3

F1 RESULTS

Saudi Arabian Grand Prix Laps: 50 Distance: 191.662 miles
Track: Jeddah Corniche Circuit

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Sergio Perez	Red Bull-Honda	1h21m14.894s
2	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	+5.355s
3	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+20.728s
4	George Russell	Mercedes	+25.866s
5	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+31.065s
6	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+35.876s
7	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+43.162s
8	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault	+52.832s
9	Pierre Gasly	Alpine-Renault	+54.747s
10	Kevin Magnussen	Haas-Ferrari	+1m04.826s

11 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) +1m07.494s; 12 Nico Hulkenberg (Haas-Ferrari) +1m10.588s; 13 Guanyu Zhou (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) +1m16.060s; 14 Nyck de Vries (AlphaTauri-Honda) +1m17.478s; 15 Oscar Piastri (McLaren-Mercedes) +1m25.021s; 16 Logan Sargeant (Williams-Mercedes) +1m26.293s; 17 Lando Norris (McLaren-Mercedes) +1m26.445s; 18 Valtteri Bottas (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 19 Alexander Albon (Williams-Mercedes) -27 laps/brakes; 20 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin-Mercedes) -16 laps/engine. **Drivers' championship:** 1 Verstappen 44pts; 2 Perez 43; 3 Alonso 30; 5 Sainz 20; 5 Hamilton 20; 6 Russell 18. **Constructors' championship:** 1 Red Bull 87pts; 2 Aston Martin 38; 3 Mercedes 38; 4 Ferrari 26; 5 Alpine 8; 6 Alfa Romeo 4.



Leclerc was forced to fight back after a 10-place grid drop

While Sergio Perez said his fifth Formula 1 victory was one of the best performances of his career, it was also one of his easiest. His route to the top step of the Saudi Arabian podium was aided by his team-mate's broken driveshaft in qualifying.

But such is the dominance of this year's Red Bull, many expected Max Verstappen to still finish on the podium after starting a lowly 15th on the grid. And he did, five seconds behind Perez at the flag.

Despite the ease with which the Dutchman came through the field, there was still some slight concern on the Red Bull pitwall, as Max complained of "weird noises at high speed" coming from the internals of his RB19. None of these problems hampered his 50th and final tour – good enough for fastest lap – to retain his position at the top of the World championship points table by a point from Perez. In what is turning into a two-horse race between the Red Bull team-mates, every point and, more significantly, reliability issues could be crucial over the course of the season.

Last Sunday's race at the spectacular Jeddah Corniche Circuit was relatively tame compared to the previous two editions. The reduction in kerb height, in addition to apex walls being positioned further back to increase sight-lines have undoubtedly helped. But despite no major contact with the wall over the three days, the speeds are still impressively high.

The main talking point of the race surrounded Fernando Alonso. Just as in Bahrain, the Aston Martin proved to be the second-quickest machine in Jeddah and with Charles Leclerc serving a 10-place grid penalty for early power unit changes, Alonso lined up on the front row next to poleman Perez.

Going into Turn 1 he snatched the lead from the Mexican, but his time at the head of the field was short-lived: Perez was back in front by lap four. More ominously for



Russell held off team-mate Hamilton over the latter stages for fourth

Alonso, the stewards had noted he was parked slightly to the left of his grid hatching for the start. In what seems an extreme decision – because of no obvious advantage – he was awarded a five-second penalty.

On lap 19, his Aston Martin team-mate Lance Stroll was told to park up with an issue with his energy store. That necessitated the appearance of the safety car and Alonso served his penalty during this short caution period. It meant he kept his place ahead of George Russell during the race's one and only strategic tyre stop.

At the restart on lap 21, Perez roared into the distance like a scalded cat. Behind him, Alonso was second but was helpless to hold back Verstappen, who had already worked his way up into podium contention. Alonso was more concerned about keeping a healthy gap to the Mercedes of George Russell. Sensing there might be another penalty to come the way of the Spaniard, in the latter stages of the race Russell explained he drove like a "bad man" to try and get within five seconds of the Aston Martin.

In response, Alonso's final lap – his personal best – was typically brilliant and he secured third place by 5.138s from Russell. The oldest driver in the field enjoyed arguably the biggest grin as he celebrated his 100th podium in F1 with the two Red Bull drivers.

Then in the minutes after the rostrum the

stewards decided Alonso had incorrectly served his penalty and was given a more serious 10-second punishment that put him behind Russell in the final classification. Why oh why, had that decision come so late when the pitstop was served so early? "I feel it was a bit harsh, what happened to Fernando, as I think some of the penalties this year have been a bit extreme," said Russell – who had been handed the third-placed trophy in the paddock and was invited to the FIA's post-race, top-three press conference. "Plus I didn't know he'd served [the first penalty] in the pitstop and in the final laps I pushed like mad to close the gap."

All of that was pantomime, however. Hours after the race, Aston Martin had taken its case to the stewards to appeal the decision over the second infringement and they agreed with Russell that the penalty had been harsh: Alonso's second censure was overturned and he was returned to the top three.

Russell finished ahead of his team-mate Hamilton. Then it was all rather Noah's Ark with the Ferraris and Alpines following behind. Kevin Magnussen grabbed the final points position with 10th for Haas after winning a spirited battle with AlphaTauri's Yuki Tsunoda. Meanwhile, after Stroll, the race's only other retirement was Alex Albon who suffered an issue with his brakes and pitted on lap 27.

RACING NEWS



Vesti took feature glory

FOURTH DIFFERENT WINNER IN FOUR RACES IN FORMULA 2

Red Bull ace Ayumu Iwasa and Mercedes junior driver Frederik Vesti shared the two Formula 2 victories in two bruising races on the Jeddah circuit in Saudi Arabia last weekend.

In the opening race, Japanese Iwasa took the sprint glory for DAMS after capitalising on a strong start from fourth and then overtaking the polesitter Jak Crawford (Hitech). ART's Victor Martins climbed from 10th to second place by overtaking the MP Motorsport machine of Jehan Daruvala.

The main incident of the race occurred as Theo Pourchaire (ART) locked up at Turn 1 and cannoned into Brit Ollie Bearman (Prema), putting them both out while battling for sixth.

In the second race, the feature, both frontrunners Martins and Bearman spun out in unforced errors. Those mistakes plus strong race pace were enough for Vesti (Prema) to secure victory. He led home Alpine's Jack Doohan and Daruvala.

Round one winner Ralph Boschung leads the standings by one point from Pourchaire. The next rounds will be at Albert Park on April 1-2.

RIVALS LEFT BREATHLESS AFTER RED BULL CRUSHES THE REST IN JEDDAH

Seven-time champ Hamilton says RB19 is the "fastest he has seen"

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool, Motorsport Images



Red Bull locked out the top two for the second race in succession



Lewis: 'No stopping Max'

By Matt James

Red Bull's domination of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix has sent shockwaves through the Formula 1 paddock as opposing teams are fearing a season of domination from the Milton Keynes squad.

Sergio Perez and Max Verstappen performed another lock-out of the top two steps of the podium in Saudi, with Perez claiming the victory. Two-time champion Verstappen's runner-up slot came despite the fact he had been forced to start in 15th after a driveshaft failure during the second session in qualifying.

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton finished fifth behind his team-mate George Russell, and he said that rivals were powerless to halt the march of the Red Bull cars. "When we were fast, we weren't that fast," the seven-time champion said. "That is the fastest car I have seen compared to the rest."

Third-placed Fernando Alonso – who started on the front row of the grid – said that he and the Aston Martin team still had hopes of finishing in front of the Red Bulls, but it would require something unusual.

"We need some help from them," Alonso said. "But it will happen eventually. They cannot always finish first and second. At some circuits maybe reliability or whatever could help us and hopefully in those

races we take the opportunity."

Despite Red Bull's successful start to the season, there is hope for rival teams: the penalty for its cost-cap breach in 2021 means that it will have less development time than others over the course of the 2023 campaign. However, team principal Christian Horner said that early work means the effects should be negated.

"It was so critical for us to come out of the blocks competitively," Horner said. "The windtunnel reduction has applied since last October, so we couldn't afford to miss the target, because you'd never be able to engineer your way out of it with that handicap."

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff said that while it would take time for the others to rein in the Red Bulls, it was down to work the British team had done in the off-season.

"It is a meritocracy," Wolff said. "Even if it is not great for the show that the same guys win all the time, it is because they have done a good job and we haven't."

"We shouldn't down-talk it, because I remember hearing questions like that in 2014-2020 [when Merc was dominating], and what makes the sport so special is that you need to work hard to win and you deserve it as a matter of fact. Entertainment follows sport. It is maybe not good from the commercial side but it is what makes F1 so special."

F1 EXTENDS DEAL TO RACE AT THE RED BULL RING

Formula 1 will continue to race at the Red Bull Ring until at least 2027 after a new deal was inked between the circuit bosses and grand prix chiefs.

The race, which returned to the F1 calendar in 2014 after a 10-year hiatus, has become a popular venue with Dutch fans, who go the venue to support World

champion Max Verstappen. This year the circuit, which is owned by Red Bull, will again host one of the six 2023 Sprint Qualifying races, as it did last term.

F1 president Stefano Domenicali said: "The race brings together the perfect mix of a challenging track, high-speed racing, and a beautiful venue."



Austrian colours will continue to fly on the Formula 1 race calendar

TOYOTA FENDS OFF THE NEWCOMERS IN SEBRING ENDURANCE OPENER

The Toyota Hypercar crew of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez claimed a tense victory in the new dawn for the World Endurance Championship at the Sebring 1000 Miles last Friday with Ferrari making a strong impression on the debut of its 499P machine.

The victorious Toyota crew was able to pull clear of the closely following sister GR010 Hybrid of Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa over the closing stages as Buemi reported a mysterious loss of handling prowess.

Ferrari had started the race from pole position with Antonio Fuoco but a botched early strategy call left the Italian machine, which he shared with Niklas Nielsen and Miguel Molina, having to carve back up through the pack. The trio took third spot, although they were two laps adrift of the winners.

The new Cadillac V-Series.R of Britons Richard Westbrook and Alex Lynn, partnered by Earl Bamber, claimed fourth place ahead of the factory Porsche of Dane Cameron Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki. The second factory



Ferrari led from pole, but it was champion Toyota that prevailed

Porsche of Kevin Estre, Andre Lotterer and Laurens Vanthoor was sixth after a disappointing showing from the German cars.

The LMP2 division was won by David Beckmann, Ye Yifei and Will Stevens, while the GT Am division was claimed by Corvette, with Ben Keating, Nicky Catsburg and Nicolas Varrone prevailing.

●The action express Cadillac of Alex

Sims, Pipo Derani and Jack Aitken claimed victory in the 12 Hours of Sebring IMSA round. A late collision amid traffic between the battling lead duo of Dane Cameron, Nick Tandy and Mattieu Jaminet (Porsche) and the Acura of Ricky Taylor, Felipe Albuquerque and Louis Deletraz helped the BMW of Nick Yelloly, Sheldon van der Linde and Connor de Phillippi into second spot.

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RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

FERGUSON CONFIDENT “NEW RAM” WILL BE AS STRONG AS BEFORE

John Ferguson is confident that the reigning double British GT champion team RAM Racing will maintain its high standards following a major overhaul during the close season.

RAM this year has new management – its founder Dan Shufflebottom stepped back during the winter – and a new-look technical team, after getting new ownership in early 2022 when Ferguson’s family-owned business Edwin Lowe Group purchased the outfit.

Amateur driver Ferguson last year had his first season of GT3 racing in British GT with RAM, with Ian Loggie in the other RAM Mercedes taking the drivers’ crown. Ferguson this year will race in a single-Mercedes GT3 RAM British GT effort alongside newly acquired GT superstar Raffaele Marciello.

Ferguson told MN: “[There have been] a lot of changes at RAM. I had to take RAM and make it into a business that didn’t lose money, so obviously it was a few disagreements along the way with that. The old RAM’s a very very good team, I just hope the new RAM is a good team as well. Seems to be fitting into place.

“Stan Harper, [BMW factory driver] Dan Harper’s dad, is running the workshop. I’m comfortable with the people we have in.”



All change for Ferguson



GILLES TRIBUTE

British GT frontrunner Michael O'Brien has revealed his new helmet design inspired by Formula 1 legend Gilles Villeneuve. O'Brien said: "I'm a bit of an anorak in that respect, because I do quite a bit of historic racing, I've done a Jim Clark replica helmet for the F1 race at Goodwood. Through my family I've been able to look back on the history of the sport. It's a nice little touch, I'm inspired by [Villeneuve's] driving and everything that he stood for."



Champ has new colours

LOGGIE SAYS “POLITICS” BEHIND TEAM MOVE

Reigning British GT champion has explained his surprise switch from RAM to 2 Seas for his 2023 title defence

By Graham Keilloh

Reigning British GT champion Ian Loggie has said “politics” were behind his move from RAM Racing to 2 Seas Motorsport to defend his crown in 2023.

Explaining why he’d moved from the team he’d raced with since 2019, Loggie said: “With RAM, great team,

bit of politics going on as there always is in motorsport, and I’m here to drive rather than get involved in politics. So I think I’ve done the right thing, 2 Seas will do a great job.”

RAM has undergone an overhaul since last season (see separate story), and in 2023 is entering a single Mercedes in British GT for John Ferguson and superstar Raffaele Marciello.

Amateur driver Loggie also intends to have another busy year, after in 2022 doing more than 80 races. He said the track time was vital to winning his crown.

When asked by Motorsport News if he planned similar this year, Loggie replied: “Maybe not the full 80 races but we’ll be doing a lot. I’ve got some Radical racing in Dubai, we’ve been racing in Porsche Challenge in Europe so far, we’ve got



Loggie is set for another busy year

quite a big test programme in the Mercedes, there’s talk of GT Cup etc as well.

“The other guys they’ve seen the amount of races that we did last year and I can see that everyone’s thinking the same thing. Guys like Morgan [Tillbrook] who are going to be right at the front are doing a lot, and if I don’t do the seat time I might not get to the front.”

COMBE UNVEILS C1 AND SPORTS RACES

Castle Combe Racing Club’s unveiled 2023 programme includes a prize-money race for Citroen C1 Challenge and CityCar Cup machines plus a taster race reviving its former Sports Racing contest.

Cars from the C1 Challenge endurance series and British Racing and Sports Car Club’s CityCar Cup are eligible for the CCRC C1 Sprint Challenge, an event suggested by club members. It has two 20-minute sprint races and a £1500 prize fund donated by a transport company that wished to remain anonymous. Results will be aggregated and prizes go to the top four, with £650 for first.

CCRC chairman Ken Davies said:

“There’s a lot of prepared appropriate cars out there. Also it gives an opportunity to give cars a run out in a shorter format, and [for] drivers to get experience and signatures.

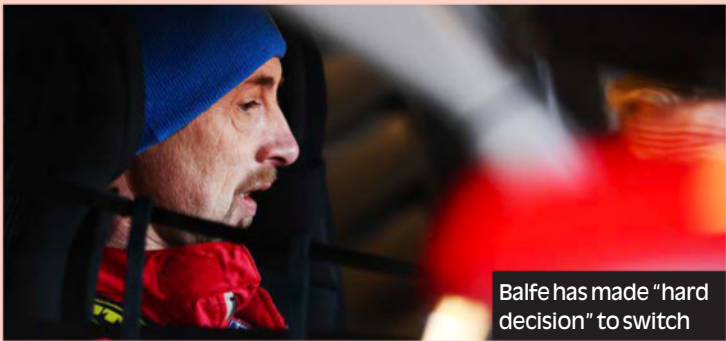
“I don’t think we intend to compete against BRSCC or C1s, [it’s] a taster race to see if there’s any appetite for shorter races.”

The CCRC Sports Racer Challenge also has two 20-minute contests and racers compete for the Norman Lackford Trophy, named after the Combe sports-racing stalwart.

Both the C1 and Sports Racer double-headers take place at the July 15 Combe Carnival Race Day.



Two ‘taster’ events will be put on at the Wiltshire venue in July



Balfe has made “hard decision” to switch

BALFE SEEKS BALANCE AT BARWELL

British GT frontrunner Shaun Balfe has said his switch from his family run team to race with Barwell this season stemmed from seeking a better balance between business and racing.

Amateur driver Balfe for 2023 joins Sandy Mitchell in a strong-looking Lamborghini GT3 pairing at the multiple-champion Barwell team.

Balfe told Motorsport News: “The focus has always been the family construction business and having my own team was a great chapter, so it was an incredibly hard decision.

“But remembering that this was all born from a hobby. The reality was as good as those people were it did need

managing and there is an element of responsibility there. If I’m messing around in the workshop arguably I’m not doing the bit that earns the money.

“And then unexpectedly I was quite overwhelmed with the approaches from different teams. Barwell, [having] raced against them I know exactly what their level and standards are and I’ve got similarities to that, and then the opportunity to share the car with Sandy. There were a lot of things starting to align.”

British GT has revealed a capacity 36-car 2023 full-season entry, split evenly between GT3 and GT4. The GT3s include eight factory drivers.

RACING NEWS



Grant is go in female contest

GRANT GETS F1 ACADEMY DRIVE

GB4 racer Chloe Grant will race in the new all-female F1 Academy championship this year with ART Grand Prix joining fellow GB4 graduates Megan Gilkes and Jessica Edgar in the contest.

The Scot, who turned 17 on Monday this week, made her single-seater debut in the inaugural GB4 championship last season with Graham Brunton Racing, taking nine top-eight finishes in the final 12 races. Grant also was a finalist in 2022's FIA Girls on Track Rising Stars programme.

Formula 4-level F1 Academy's seven-round season starts at the Red Bull Ring next month and concludes supporting Austin's US Grand Prix. Grant joins Lena Buhler and Carrie Schreiner at ART.

Grant said: "[ART and I] share the same ambition for winning and with the history and victory that ART Grand Prix carries, I look forward to seeing what we can achieve."

"The F1 Academy presents an opportunity to us female drivers that we haven't seen before."

RADICAL GETS NEW DONINGTON HQ

The UK's largest race-car manufacturer shifts its sales and marketing teams to new venue set to open this spring



Radical gets new abode

By Graham Keillor

Radical Motorsport will open a customer-facing corporate headquarters at Donington Park this spring for its sales and marketing teams, this first time it has moved these from its Peterborough base.

Radical's Peterborough factory, its base since its 1997 inception, will continue as the outfit's manufacturing and production location. Radical added that it "remains fully committed to its roots in Cambridgeshire".

Radical, the UK's largest race-car

manufacturer, is moving after strong growth in 2022 wherein it built and sold more cars than ever before.

The former Formula E HQ building next to the Donington circuit's main entrance will provide office space, an event venue, a destination for owners and fans, and a unique meeting space.

Radical CEO Joe Anwyll said: "We looked at a number of non-circuit-based locations in the UK to host our expanding commercial team. However, with British motorsport tracks widely known as being some of the best in the world, we had to take this opportunity, as a British motorsport manufacturer, to be right



Manufacturer had major growth

on the doorstep of the action.

"As well as our expanding team and record production numbers this year, this move to Donington Park will allow us to pursue ventures we've been unable to from our factory."

Jonathan Palmer, chief executive of MotorSport Vision that operates Donington, added: "Since MSV took over the running of the venue in 2018, it's been our ambition not just to create an improved competitor and spectator experience but also to elevate the circuit's standing as a major national hub of motorsport businesses. The future for the site is looking very bright indeed."

F4'S MACINTYRE OFFERS A MONEY-CAN'T-BUY DAY OUT

British Formula 4 racer Will Macintyre is offering money-can't-buy tickets to join him for a VIP day in a race paddock this season in return for a £5 charity donation.

For the £5, or a larger donation if wished, entrants will have a chance of claiming one of 60 tickets that are spread throughout 2023's 10 British F4 meetings.

Recipients will join Macintyre in the British Touring Car Championship support event's paddock to be hosted for an all-access full day, where winners will get up close to Macintyre, his car and team, and have a chance to sit in his car, which is not usually offered with a normal hospitality ticket.

The single-day experience can be on the Friday test day, or the Saturday or Sunday. Entrants also if they wish can nominate someone else who they feel is deserving to receive the experience. Macintyre will email all donors to thank them and give an opportunity to outline why the recipient is deserving of the day out.

Macintyre told Motorsport News: "We thought it's a great way to give back to fans, especially some who don't have the chance. Anyone can do it [enter], and if you want to you can donate [the ticket] to whoever you want."

To be in with a chance, fans can make their donation at: mightycause.com/story/Formula4viptickets/williammacintyre.

Stewart is stepping in to the Elite in GB3



STEWART STEPS TO GB3

Scottish teenager Oliver Stewart is stepping from British Formula 4 to race in GB3 this season completing Elite's three-strong line-up

The 16-year-old from Beaulieu near Inverness made his car-racing debut with Hitech GP in British F4 last year and finished 10th in the standings, scoring one race win. He joins

McKenzy Cresswell and Ayato Iwasaki at Elite for 2023.

Stewart said: "Having tested with Elite last November, I was overwhelmed by their professionalism and determination to get the best out of the car and myself. I knew from the get-go that I was surrounded by a team of passionate professionals

with a mass of experience in motorsport. I was immediately made to feel welcome.

"I have found the grip level a massive difference moving up a category to GB3. It requires you to be extremely smooth on steering in order to get the best out of it. Not only that but the car feels quicker and is overall an enjoyable car to drive."



Racer offering VIP days

JAMSPORT MAKES MINI CHALLENGE RETURN

Champion JamSport is returning to the Mini Challenge this season with a JCW entry for its graduating Fiesta racer Marlo Cordell.

JamSport took Ant Whorton-Eales to the 2018 Mini JCW crown, and now returns to the championship for the first time since a brief late-2021 appearance.

Cordell, 19, has raced with the team in the British Racing and Sports Car Club's Fiesta championship since mid-2021 and rose to the

frontrunning ST240 class last season, finishing eighth in the standings. He also has Britcar experience with JamSport, taking a double class win in Brands Hatch's 'Into the Night' races alongside JamSport boss Jamie Going.

Cordell is coached by Whorton-Eales and is also JamSport's TCR UK development driver.

Going said: "Marlo came to us with very minimal experience. He's gone from strength to strength."



Cordell (l) steps to Minis with Whorton-Eales' help

SWEDISH KARTER TO BRITISH F4

Swedish teenage karting graduate Gustav Jonsson has become the third driver to join Chris Dittmann Racing's British Formula 4 championship line-up for 2023.

Jonsson, who has competed in Swedish karting circles since 2017, has completed several pre-season test days with CDR. He completes CDR's line-up alongside Jack Sherwood and Daniel Guinchard, and this three-car attack follows a 2022 British F4 campaign in which CDR often had a single-car entry.

Team owner Chris Dittmann said: "[Jonsson] had some really positive test days with us. It's going to be a competitive field this year, so it's a big ask for Gustav coming

straight from karts, but driver development is our bag and he's already shown he's got potential.

"We're looking forward to continue working together and helping him achieve the very best results he can as the season progresses."



CDR: three-pronged attack

RALLY NEWS

GREENSMITH BEGINS NEW LIFE IN WRC2 AS A WINNER

Briton's decision to step back in performance pays off at his first attempt in



Gus Greensmith gelled with Skoda

By Graham Lister

Gus Greensmith's decision to switch back to WRC2 for 2023 was vindicated when he won the category on Rally Mexico last weekend.

The Manchester driver dropped out of the World championship's top level at the end of 2022 – where he'd competed since 2020 – after choosing against funding either a second campaign in an M-Sport Ford Puma Rally1 or a partial programme in a privately-entered Toyota Yaris.

In Germany-based Turkish-owned Toksport, Greensmith has joined WRC2's best team, which also enjoys Skoda technical support. And the 26-year-old, who was co-driven by Swede Jonas Andersson, made the most of opportunity with a class win on his first appearance of the season.

"From stage six the whole rally was under control," said Greensmith. "When we needed to go faster, we could gap everyone and after that it was about controlling it. We've not put a foot wrong, Jonas has done a great job, first rally with



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull Content Pool

Triumph vindicated WRC2 switch for Brit

Skoda and Toksport so thank you to them."

Greensmith had one competitive outing in Skoda's new-for-2023 Fabia prior to Rally Mexico – a snow-hit regional-level event in Portugal – but belied that lack of experience in the heat and high altitude of the Leon-based round. "We didn't have a lot of time to get used to this car, but it was the perfect way to start the year," said Greensmith, who is now planning to contest the opening round of the Croatian championship – Rally Karlovac from March 31-April 2 – as a warm-up to the country's WRC counter from April 20-23.

MEXICO STAGE MURAL PAYSTIBUTE TO BLOCK

Rally Mexico organisers paid tribute to Ken Block with a special mural painted on the wall of Guanajuato street stage tunnel last Thursday evening.

The American, who enjoyed a huge global online following through his Gymkhana stunt driving videos, made his World Rally Championship debut in Mexico in 2007. The event also marked his final WRC event appearance in 2020, which ended in retirement. His best Rally Mexico result was the seventh place he secured on the 2013 rally driving a Ford Fiesta WRC. Block was killed in a snowmobile accident on his ranch in Utah, USA on January 2.



Wall was painted in tribute

MEXICO MASTER OGIER SPARES A THOUGHT FOR UNLUCKY EVANS

Sebastien Ogier cut short his Rally Mexico win celebrations to show his support to team-mate Elfyn Evans.

Evans, who moved into second at the completion of Saturday's first stage, was unable to make it a Toyota 1-2 due to having to nurse a damaged suspension arm through the event's closing three stages on Sunday.

The Welshman lost out on the runner-up spot to Hyundai driver Thierry Neuville by 0.4

seconds and could do no better than sixth on the points-paying Powerstage.

After hearing of his fellow Yaris driver's plight, eight-time World champion Ogier said: "That's really unlucky because he deserved [second place]. Unfortunately he had a damaged car to finish the rally but still it's a strong weekend for team."

Scott Martin, who co-drove Evans to his first podium since last August's Ypres Rally in Belgium, said: "We had



Evans was forced to slow at the end with car woe

good speed and a good feeling all weekend and thought we could get second but with our issue we just couldn't hold on. But a podium is fantastic."

Second place for Evans in

Mexico means he heads to Croatia for round four of the season next month fourth in the standings with 44 points, 12 down on new championship leader Ogier.

EVANS FEARFUL OF MEXICO FAILURE FOLLOWING IMPACT

Elfyn Evans said that he feared his quick fix to his Toyota Yaris might not hold and that his hopes of a first podium since last summer's Ypres Rally would be dashed.

Although the suspension arm issue essentially cost Evans second place by 0.4

seconds, the Welshman admitted he had more to lose than just the runner-up spot in Mexico.

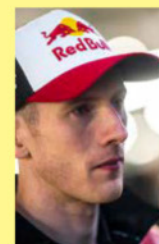
"We had an impact [when] braking three kilometres from the end of [the 22-mile Otates stage]," Evans explained. "I knew then that the steering was a bit out of

line but I was not really expecting to find what I did. It was a bit disheartening. I was fearful [it could break].

"We thought we would try and see. I wouldn't say we went flat out on the Powerstage, there was an element that we had to look after it. If there

was a bad dip or a bad jump, we had to take a bit of care.

"We were trying not to give away time but it was a fine balance between trying to hang on to second and not coming away from here with no points. At the end we were 0.4s short."



Evans: pipped



Loeb will tackle the island event

LOEB IN SHOCK AZORES DEBUT PLAN

Sebastien Loeb is a shock addition to the Azores Rallye registrations after organisers made good on their promise to secure a top-class entry.

Having slipped off the European championship calendar and been unable to secure one of the Portuguese ASN FPAK's two available European Rally Trophy slots, the 57th Azores Rallye won't run as part of a major championship.

To counter this, event bosses are understood to have invested heavily to bring a host of star names to the Sao Miguel island rally with the nine-time World champion the pick of the bunch.

Loeb wrote on social media: "Super-excited to be able to take on the Azores Rallye for the first time in my career".

As well as tackling an event considered one of the world's most spectacular, Loeb will make his competition debut in a Toksport-run Skoda Fabia RS Rally2. Laurene Godey will co-drive.

Other leading names on the Azores Rallye entry list include two-time Azores winner and European and WRC2 champion Andreas Mikkelsen, two-time ERC event winner Nil Solans, Ole Christian Veiby and Erik Cais.

This year's Azores Rallye takes place from March 31-April 2, albeit over a significantly shortened route compared to previous editions due to organisational difficulties.

McERLEAN OPEN TO MORE ERC RUNS

Josh McErlean isn't ruling out further European championship appearances this year despite a tough outing on the season opener in Portugal earlier this month.

McErlean finished outside the points-paying positions in 19th after he picked up a puncture on the opening day aboard his Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy Hyundai i20 N Rally2.

"The ERC is fantastic [and] attracts rapid, world-class drivers, so putting myself up against that is good for me," said McErlean. "I have been concentrating on WRC but, as a team, we want to keep progressing and increase the pace. The ERC is the perfect format for this."



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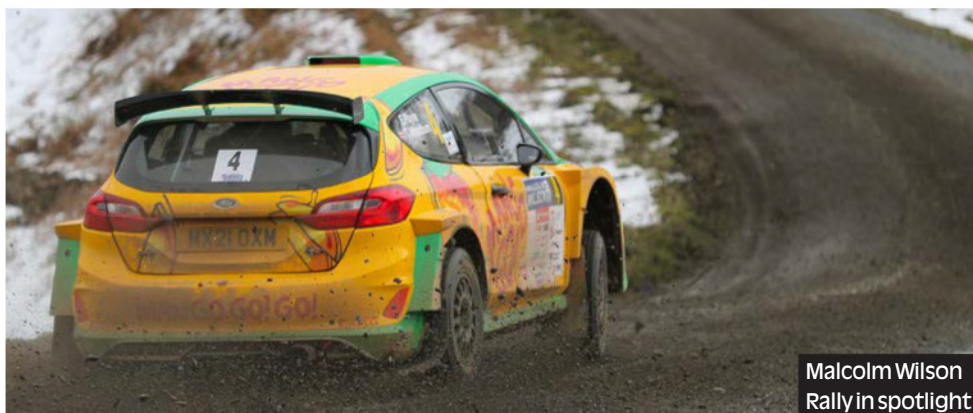
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RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Money

WILSON UNCERTAIN ABOUT HIS RALLY'S BRC FUTURE

Talks are needed to secure longevity of the Cumbrian event



Malcolm Wilson
Rally in spotlight

By Carl McKellar

M-Sport boss and rally sponsor Malcolm Wilson said that discussions are needed to convince him to keep the Malcolm Wilson Rally as part of the British Rally Championship in 2024.

Asked about its place on next year's BRC calendar, Wilson told MN: "I think there's some discussions probably need to take place before we commit to that. We would like to stay but I think we need to see some changes, shall we say."

Wilson, Motorsport UK CEO David Richards and Head of Rallies Jonathan Jackson held discussions on the eve of the event, the first time it had run as a BRC round.

BRC Championship manager Reece Tarren said he hoped the event will continue to be part of the calendar.

Tarren told MN: "Absolutely. Everybody has said these are drivers' stages and they are not wrong; we have access to a stage put together by a WRC team in Greystoke plus Grizedale which is iconic,"



Wilson: changes are needed

"We have a title sponsor locked in for two years starting next year which gives us the financial freedom to play with marketing ideas. I'd also like to make it a bit more of a show. Calendar-wise, I'm not sure yet, although this year's is pretty strong."

"We've got a lot of dead classes so maybe classes is something we change," added Tarren. "It's something I'm toying with. Ultimately, we don't want to restrict the championship to just homologated cars. I can't go into details but I'm hoping to make it a bit more open."

FOURMAUX SET FOR MORE BRC ON JIM CLARK RALLY

M-Sport team boss Richard Millener says that WRC2 driver Adrien Fourmaux is likely to contest the second round of the British Rally Championship, the Jim Clark Rally in May.

The Frenchman emerged as a comfortable winner of the BRC's opening round, the Malcolm Wilson Rally, before flying out to contest WRC Rally Mexico. Asked if he would like to take in more BRC events this year, Fourmaux said: "Yes, for sure, but we will

have to see with the calendar." Millener has since confirmed that Fourmaux is scheduled to return for the closed-road Jim Clark Rally on May 26-27.

"Our plan at the moment is to try and do the Jim Clark Rally with him and see how we go from there," Millener said. "Some events are quite tight on the schedule with BRC and WRC but certainly in the short term the plan was always to try and do at least a couple."

Millener also said that

M-Sport's Ford Puma Rally1 car, driven by Jourdan Serderidis on the Malcolm Wilson, could be seen again on UK events in 2023. "It's always a possibility, but we need to make sure it's a realistic one," Millener said. "It's not eligible to score points but Motorsport UK was helpful in allowing us to run it on the Malcolm Wilson. In the right hands it can win events. The cars are here at base: we just need decent notice if people are interested."



M-Sport's star could return to the British contest

KELLY AND CAMPLING REBUILD AND RETURN AT DONINGTON PARK

Mark Kelly and David Campling both returned to competition on the Dukeries Rally at Donington Park after major accidents over the last two years.

MN Circuit Rally champion Kelly was competing for the first time since last September after a challenging 2022 season. His Ford Fiesta R5 was badly damaged on the Argyll Stages at the end of June and then he switched to a Skoda Fabia R5 that was damaged three months later when he aquaplaned off the road on the Isle of Man.

Kelly, after finishing second, told MN: "I was a bit rusty to start with, but then it was great. But having rebuilt two cars over the winter I will be sticking to single-venue events this season."

Campling, who has done a lot of his rallying in Belgium, was out in his Fabia R5 for the first time since a huge accident during the shakedown for the Pokerstars Rally on the Isle of Man in October 2021. The Fabia's rebuild was only completed in the week before the Donington event. "We drove it around the lanes, so I suppose this was a shakedown," said Campling.



Campling made a comeback



Mulholland was encouraged after initial Fiesta Rally3 run

MULHOLLAND EXPECTS MORE PACE FROM RALLY3 FIESTA AFTER BRC BOW

Johnnie Mulholland believes there is a lot more to come from his Ford Fiesta Rally3 after giving the car its debut on the Malcolm Wilson Rally.

The 25-year-old Northern Irishman finished 13th after collecting a road penalty while fixing a broken alternator belt.

The four-wheel-drive R3 was occasionally able to get close to the times set by some of the

Rally2 and R5 machinery, but Mulholland admitted he had been cautious in the icy conditions.

Mulholland told MN: "I was apprehensive early on; it was difficult to commit in those conditions first time in the car and the event was about adapting and development. The Rally2s and R5s are still a bit quicker but I think there's a lot

more to come. I believe M-Sport have some upgrades coming and then it's down to seat time.

"A lot of it is down to confidence. I got to grips with the general driving of it, but mid-speed cornering and late braking is where there's some homework to be done. On the final Greystoke stage we were nearly a minute faster than we'd been in the morning."



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RALLY NEWS

CO-DRIVER WALSH COMPETES IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND IN TWO DAYS

Multi-country campaign for successful navigator over a busy sporting weekend

By Martin Walsh

Leading Welsh co-driver Patrick Walsh successfully contested rallies in Scotland and Ireland over the first weekend of March.

Walsh, who contested 33 rallies in 2022, partnered Freddie Milne (Skoda Fabia R5) on the Snowman Rally on Saturday and Declan Boyle (VW Polo GTi R5) on the Midland Moto Stages on Sunday, finishing 23rd and seventh respectively.

They had to get permission to recce on another day for the

Midland Moto Stages so Walsh left directly from the finish of the East Riding Stages for the Liverpool to Dublin ferry and arrived at 0500hrs Monday. They made notes for the three stages and he then drove back to Dublin to catch the evening ferry to Holyhead, finally getting home to Aberystwyth at 0230hrs on Tuesday.

"On the weekend of the Snowman-Midland Moto I drove part of the way to Inverness on Thursday to stay in Carlisle that night and completed the journey on Friday. Due to delays on the Snowman, I jumped out of the

rally car when we got to the finish for the three-and-a-half hour drive to Glasgow Airport. The flight arrived in Dublin just before midnight and after collecting a hire car, I got to the hotel about 0200hrs on Sunday!"

After the Midland Moto Stages he had a leisurely drive back to Dublin Airport to stay overnight and a flight to Glasgow on Monday before getting home at 1900hrs. Last weekend he was back in Ireland for West Cork and this weekend Walsh will partner Roger Chilman in the BHRC on Rally North Wales.



Photos: Martin Walsh, Ben Lawrence

Walsh was alongside Declan Boyle for the Midland Moto Stages after an epic trip

TYNESIDE STAGES IS CANCELLED FOR 2023

The organisers of the Tyneside Stages have announced that the event will not take place this year due to being unable to secure a suitable route on the Otterburn ranges.

The August 6 rally will not go ahead despite valiant efforts by the organisers to secure a second venue. The loss of one of two planned events for Otterburn this year is a major blow to asphalt rallying in the north of England.

However, the team from Alnwick and Berwick motor clubs will now re-focus its work on a planned closed-road event in Northumberland, which is scheduled for August 2024.



Frank Bird will now be taking a break from UK rallying

BIRD HAS RALLY LICENCE SUSPENDED FOR 12 MONTHS

Frank Bird will not contest any rallies in 2023 after the National Court of Motorsport UK suspended his rally licence for a period of 12 months. However, Bird will be able to retain his international race licence for GT racing.

Bird, 23 years old, planned to contest the Brands Hatch Winter Stages in January but left it late applying for his licence and failed to

complete the application for three-hour processing.

Bird then attempted to falsify a competition licence confirmation document ahead of the event, but the document was identified as a forgery. Bird was summoned to appear before the court and made full and frank admission in relation to what he had done, along with giving an unreserved apology.

The court noted his apologies

and also made some further allowance in view of his age. However, in such circumstances, a lengthy licence suspension would be an inevitable consequence. In this case, the national court suspended his rally licence for 12 months. Bird will also be required to undertake three days of voluntary service to motorsport before the end of June. The ruling means that Bird will not rally during 2023.

BOGIE TO CONTEST FULL IRISH SEASON IN ESCORT

David Bogie will focus his efforts on the Irish National Championship this season in his modified Ford Escort Mk2.

The six-time Scottish and 2011 British Rally champion has never contested a full season in Ireland but having looked at various options for this season he's elected to commit to the Emerald Isle.

Bogie told MN: "We decided I'd like to use the Escort more—it's a fantastic car and we probably don't

use it enough, and obviously when it comes to modified rallying Ireland is the place to go. The Jim Clark does clash with one of the rounds—whether we would drop an Irish round and do the Jim Clark instead we need to wait and see but we'll just try and stick in the Escort as much as we can. The car gets an unbelievable amount of attention, it just amazes me every time."

Bogie's season began with the Midland Moto Stages Rally earlier



Bogie has Irish challenge

this month where he finished fifth. He said: "Looking back, the tyres we were using for the first and second loop weren't fit for purpose, so it was good but the result could have been better."

EDWARDS SWITCHES TO THREE-LITRE DURATEC POWER

Lee Edwards was one of the drivers of the day on the AGBO Stages at Weston Park in his first rally with three-litre Duratec power in his Ford Escort G3.

The Oswestry driver took 16 months out of rallying to convert the car from a two-litre Duratec to a more powerful three-litre unit and the car ran faultlessly

on its debut event. "It's all a bit different," said Edwards of the new engine set-up. "The three-litre engine is a little bit heavier but it was a new car and it all ran well."

Edwards has rallied the same car for a decade and now plans to take it to Epynt at the end of April for the Dixies Challenge.



Edwards will now try to tame his three-litre Ford Escort

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

REID AND LINDSAY TAKE THE SPOILS ON MULL TARGA

The Northern Irish pairing of Michael Reid and John Lindsay took a narrow win on a hotly contested Mull Classic Rally.

There were a significant number of non-starters as some crews from the North of England, including previous winners, Andy Beaumont and Andrew Fish, were unable to make the journey to Mull due to snow.

Ian Buchanan/Gemma Buchanan and Jamie Stewart/Kevin Mollison took turns in the lead over the opening seven tests, which used the Fishnish and Glen Aros forests. Then, after the first of three regularities, Scott Gray/Alan Aiken hit the front. They had established a three-second lead after the eighth test when the gearbox on their Fiesta failed and they were out.

Alan Ross/Gary Ross then led for a test and the second regularity, before Fraser Hughes/Peter MacInnes edged in front. However, their tenure of first

place lasted just one test. Reid/Lindsay put in the best performance on the third regularity, which used the Mishnish Loch Road, and established a lead that they maintained to the end.

Hughes/MacInnes took the runner-up spot, three seconds ahead of Stewart/Mollison; the latter crew having been fastest over the event's 14 tests.

Heavy snow in North Wales caused the postponement of the two-day Rally Revival Targa.

Ian Mills

Results

Mull Classic Rally

Organiser: Mull Car Club and Saltire Rally Club
When: March 11 Where: Mull Championships
NESCRO Route: 14 tests and 3 regularities
Starters: 35
1 Michael Reid/John Lindsay (MG Midget) 25m27s; 2 Fraser Hughes/Peter MacInnes (Mazda MX-5i +9s); 3 Jamie Stewart/Kelth Mollison (Peugeot 205i); 4 Alan Ross/Gary Ross (Citroen C2); 5 Craig Wallace/Clifford Auld (Toyota Corolla G6R); 6 Andy Tong/Richard Crozier (Peugeot 205 GTi); 7 Ryan Hay/Charley Sayer-Payne (Toyota Paseo G6R); 8 Ian Buchanan/Gemma Buchanan (Subaru Impreza); 9 Finn Thomason/Simon Thomason (Citroen C2 GTi); 10 Tom Hynd/Sue Hynd (Fiat 500).
Class winners: Thomason/Thomason

SPORTING SCENE NEWS

BRISCA F2 ROUND-UP

Teenage kicks for Morrison at Skegness

Sixteen-year-old Caiden Morrison scored his first BriSCA Formula 2 feature final success by winning the main event at Skegness last weekend.

Morrison won a heat on his debut last November and, on only his second appearance in the formula, added two more successes on Sunday. Having qualified for the final via winning the consolation race, the Ministox graduate took the lead exiting the first bend and began building a margin. In a stoppage-free race, Morrison dealt calmly with traffic and took the flag well clear of Charlie Guinchard. National Points champion Guinchard had dislodged Dan Roots and Tom Bennett from second and third in the closing stages but could not catch the leader.

At Cowdenbeath, two-time World champion Chris Burgoyne took the honours. Burgoyne, on his first Tarmac appearance of the season, cannoned Liam Rennie into Gordon Moodie on the first corner of the final. Moodie hit the wall and was eliminated from the race. Burgoyne then steadily picked his way through the thin field, passing Emma Mellis for second just after half-distance, then reeling in last week's winner Ryan McGill who had built a healthy lead. Burgoyne squeezed inside McGill with four laps remaining, while McGill held onto second ahead of Rennie.

Mark Paulson

Results

Organiser: GMP Scotland **When:** March 18 **Where:** The Racewall, Cowdenbeath **Starters:** 11.
1 Chris Burgoyne; 2 Ryan McGill; 3 Liam Rennie; 4 Steven Burgoyne; 5 Emma Mellis; 6 John Hogg; 7 Peter Watt; 8 Ryan Farquhar; 9 Craig Reid; no other finishers.

Organiser: Skegness Raceway **When:** March 19 **Where:** Skegness Raceway **Starters:** 41.
1 Caiden Morrison; 2 Charlie Guinchard; 3 Tom Bennett; 4 Dan Roots; 5 Liam Rennie; 6 Jamie Jones; 7 Jack Witts; 8 Billy Webster; 9 Connor Smith; 10 Harley Thackra.

LARSSON OVERCOMES THE DRAMA TO CLAIM NITRO RX SILVERWARE

Title-winning Swedish driver endures a hectic final weekend in Los Angeles

Photos: JC Raceteknik, 5 Nations BRX



Larsson (r) took the Nitro spoils

By Hal Ridge

Swede Robin Larsson claimed the Nitro Rallycross Championship crown in style with a final round victory at Glen Helen in Los Angeles, but it was a turbulent weekend for double European Rallycross champion.

Larsson entered the event with a healthy lead in the points but when the penultimate weekend in Calgary had been declared a non-points' scoring round due to a thawing surface on the ice circuit, the finale weekend was made into a triple-header.

In the opening round on Friday Larsson ran into difficulties and scored his worst result of the season, with eighth. His DRR JC team-mate Andreas Bakkerud meanwhile drove to victory to close on the points leader. That gap was closed further still on Saturday, with Bakkerud again on the podium and Larsson fourth, as Travis Pastrana beat Kevin Eriksson to an emotional victory, his all-electric FC1-X machine sporting a Ken Block tribute livery.

Larsson's final race day of the season

was also a stressful one as a power-steering issue hampered his challenge in the heats. He had initially taken the top qualifier position, but a hard-but-fair pass on Pastrana for victory in the semi-finals netted him a second row start for the final. From there he climbed up the order and drove to an emphatic win to secure the 2022-2023 crown.

It was a podium lock-out for the DRR JC squad in the final round. Bakkerud was second and Fraser McConnell third as the squad also secured the Teams' crown.

"It's been a hell of a season," said Larsson. "It was way too close for me this weekend. Things went up and down, but I pulled off a really good start in the last final. I knew I had to finish the job today and take it to the finish line, and finally it's done. It's over."

British driver Kris Meeke was ruled out of the finale weekend with a broken leg, his Xite Energy Racing seat alongside Oliver Bennett filled by double DTM title-winner and World RX podium-finisher Timo Scheider. The German claimed a podium on his debut on Friday evening.

NEW HILLCLIMB VENUE IN SCOTLAND

Scotland will have a new hillclimb venue this summer when Kincardine Castle hosts competition over the weekend of July 1-2.

The venue is 25 miles inland from Aberdeen and has hosted a motor show in previous years but will now step up as a Motorsport UK-licensed hillclimb course, covering 650m in the grounds of the castle.

Kincardine Castle aims to be only the fifth licenced hillclimb course in Scotland and will welcome up to 80 drivers in a range of road-going and modified

cars as well as classic and thoroughbred cars for the first event in July. Single-seater classes will not run at the inaugural event.

The course starts with a long straight into a sweeping right-hander called Bench Corner before a shorter straight and then another fast right before the finish, which is adjacent to the paddock area.

The event will be promoted by Aberdeen District Motor Club in association with Kincardine Castle with two National B status

hillclimbs, one each day. The organisers hope that all competitors will take at least one practice run followed by four or five timed runs each day.

The event, on a course that rises approximately 35 metres, is not currently a round of any championships. The organisers are ambitiously hoping that the venue could be included in the British Hillclimb Championship in future years but given the current short length of the course, this does not seem likely at the moment.

THORNE SECURES RETURN TO START 2023 BRITISH RX SEASON

British rallycross event winner Jack Thorne will return to the series for the opening two rounds of the season over Easter Weekend with a Peugeot 208 Supercar.

A Super1600 class champion and Supercar podium-finisher, Thorne made a maiden appearance with the Albatec Racing-built 208 at the end of the 2021 campaign at Lydden Hill and won the season finale.

He spent 2022 on the sidelines due to budget constraints aside from driving a Pat Doran Citroen C4 in the opening round at Lydden Hill, but will now return with his own car for 2023 thanks to the involvement of a new sponsor.

"I've had a few things going on away from racing, some people were half



Thorne: Albatec 208 in 2021

interested in buying the Peugeot but it's still here," said Thorne. "Then a customer of mine asked why I wasn't racing, I explained the reasons and he offered to get involved for the first rounds of the championship this year and go from there. Hopefully Lydden goes well and we'll see how we can progress from there."

BRISCA F1: KING'S LYNN BY COLIN CASSERLEY

MARCH 18



Brigg (587) will be handing over some pints of milk...

BRIGG WINS BIG FROM YELLOW GRADE LAUNCHPAD

The opening meeting of the BriSCAF1 season might have lacked a few of the sport's leading drivers but those in attendance more than made up for their absence by providing some action-packed racing.

Sam Brigg finished 2022 with a string of non-finishes but he turned that around on Saturday night by winning his first BriSCA F1 final.

In the opening laps, there was a fierce battle for the top spot

between Brigg, Casey Englestone, Callum Gill and Ricky Wilson. The quartet were swapping places at every turn until Brigg muscled his way into the lead.

Further back, Craig Finnikin, who had won the last two finals at the Norfolk oval in 2022, and Mat Newson tangled. That caused them to lose almost a lap on the leaders before a yellow flag halted the race.

On the restart, Brigg battled with Englestone for the lead

with Liam Gilbank closing in. A melee on the final lap eliminated Englestone allowing Gilbank to move into runner-up spot and Newson into third.

A delighted Brigg said: "Being a yellow grade and starting at the front of the grid helped, as dealing with traffic has been a problem. I had a lot of bad luck last year when I got to red top last year. My first heat was a disaster, but Lee and Derek Fairhurst got me back out, I owe them a couple of pints... of milk..."

Second-placed Gilbank was pleased with his showing. "It was difficult starting from the back, the weather left the track with one line and getting pushed wide meant you lose a lot of time," he said. "Brigg was gone on the restart and to be fair I don't think I would have caught him."

Results

Organisers: Trackstar, BriSCA F1 **Where:** King's Lynn **When:** March 18 **Starters:** 31
1 Sam Brigg; 2 Liam Gilbank; 3 Mat Newson; 4 James Morris; 5 Mark Woodhull; 6 Sam Makim; 7 Russell Cooper; 8 Lenny Smith; 9 Arjan Ligthart; 10 Jake Harry

HISTORICS

DOWN THE WORKSHOP

DEAN FORWARD

MOTORSPORT

Barnsley-based race team



Morgan LMP2 set for Masters

It is stepping up to Masters Endurance Legends
Dean Forward: "It's a bit different. Our customer James Thwaites has got this Morgan LMP2 and he's also got an Oreca that Aaron Scott is just finishing off. He's also got the Lola T70 Mk3B, a Porsche 911 GT3 Cup and a Leyton House March CG891 F1 car. It's the Ivan Capelli car from 1989 and that will be used for demonstrations. Peter Auto are running some demo sessions at Spa and somewhere else."

The older cars have been put away for now
"We've fully restored the March and we were going to bring it out at the Masters test day but it wasn't quite ready and it was still a bit cold. We've still got the McLaren M8F and Chevron B19 from last year but Jamie [James]'s not planning on doing anything with the B19. We're going to run the McLaren up the hill at Goodwood and Jamie is going to drive it this time. We've also got an IndyCar, a Penske PC20 from 1991, and we're trying to get it to run. So we're quite busy."

It has other historic cars to tend
"There's other customers as well. Some of these cars are not our usual nuts and bolts but we're learning fast. It's just different, particularly on the electronics, but we're coming to terms with it quickly. Thomas Clarkson is taking the lead on a lot of this. As a team, we're flat out. There's only three of us at the moment and we've got a few more coming on but we'd rather be small and precise with the right people and we take a lot of pride in what we do."

Forward will share the driving
"The Masters Endurance Legends races are 40 minutes with a pitstop, so I'm going to share with Jamie. We'll see how it goes and then possibly race both LMP2s, maybe at the Silverstone Festival."

He loves the LMP2
"I've been out in the LMP2 car and it's just like a big version of my superkart – it's brilliant! It's very quick on lap times but it doesn't have the straightline punch of the Can-Am McLaren. The brakes on it are amazing and take some getting used to and I've had to change my driving style. Hopping into the LMP2 from the Lola T70 is a challenge!"

ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY ENTRY NOW AT CAPACITY

Battle lines are drawn for November's five-day spectacular in the forests

By Paul Lawrence

The first entry list for November's Roger Albert Clark Rally has been published showing a capacity field of 180 cars plus reserves.

Following an overwhelming demand for entries for the five-day rally (November 23-27), all 180 available places were booked within two weeks of entries opening. The entry system is still open, but entries received from now on go on the reserve list. On April 2, there will be a draw among all those entered for a £1000 refund on their entry fee.

The entry includes 23 overseas crews and over 80 drivers tackling the rally for the first time as well as many regular contenders and former winners. A whole gaggle of potential frontrunners are on



Photos: Paul Lawrence

De Mevius will return to R.A.C.

the list including three-time winner Marty McCormack, 2014 top man Matthew Robinson and six BHRC champions including triple title winner Jason Pritchard. Four Porsche 911s include cars for marque ace Richard Tuthill and 2022 Silver Fern Rally winner James Ford, while

Belgian father-and-son pairing Gregoire and Ghislain de Mevius will field a Nissan 240RS and Ford Escort Mk2 respectively. It will be former World Rally Championship driver Gregoire's fourth time on the rally. Rally manager Colin Heppenstall said: "We've had a

fantastic response and it's nice to know that people want to come and do the event. I'm really pleased that we have a great variety of cars entered and we've got some interesting modern two-wheel-drive cars coming from Europe including two Peugeot 208s and a Renault Clio R5 from Italy."

PEKING-PARIS TO RUN TWICE BACK-TO-BACK

The eighth edition of the Peking to Paris Motor Challenge will run in May and June 2024, five years after the last edition.

However, such is competitor demand for what is described as a life-changing event, the marathon adventure will then be run again in 2025. The eighth running of the HERO-ERA event will take in 8700 miles in 37 days

in a route that avoids Russia. The 2020 edition was lost to Covid and subsequent issues over the Chinese border have prevented the event running. Now 100 competitors will tackle what is considered by many to be the last great motoring challenge and, with a waiting list of entries, the event will run again in 2025.



Marathon motoring adventure back after five years



F1 star gets historic sports bow

ALESI TO RACE LOTUS ELAN AT PAUL RICARD

Former Ferrari Formula 1 racer Jean Alesi will make his historic sportscar debut in a Lotus Elan 26R at Paul Ricard next month.

Alesi, aged 58, is a veteran of more than 200 grand prix starts and will share the 1965 Elan with his friend and former team-mate Philippe Gache. Alesi's only

previous historic outing was in a Ferrari 312B3 at Monaco in 2021.

The Frenchman will tackle his first historic endurance event at the circuit where he began his Formula 1 career.

Gache has competed extensively, rising through single-seaters to Formula

3000 before switching to sports, GT and touring cars. He has competed in the Indy 500 and the Dakar Rally in a 40-year career.

Alesi and Gache will share the Elan in the VdV Six-Hour race on April 7-8 with experienced father-and-son pair Jean-Pierre and Stéphane Richelmi.

DEMO CHEVETTE FOR DAI 'DOT' DAVIES

Experienced Welsh rally driver Dai 'Dot' Davies has acquired a 2.6-litre Vauxhall Chevette HS, which he will use in demonstration events including the Historic Rally Festival.

The ex-works car was thought to have been last used by George Marshall in 1985 and it remains in that livery. However, it started life as Terry Kaby's yellow HS in

1980 and then went to Bill Dobie the following year to win the Castrol Autosport Championship.

The car has more recently been rebuilt by Prepfab and Davies bought it from Jason Lepley. Davies is best known for competing in quick Ford Escorts and Darrians on asphalt events. Steve Pugh is likely to co-drive the Chevette.



'Dot' to demo Chevette HS

IN BRIEF

Mowle plans

Former GT racer Lee Mowle will split his time in historic racing this season between Europe and North America. Mowle will concentrate on a Jaguar E-type in Europe in at least four races as well as some Formula Junior outings while continuing to race with Classic Team Lotus in Historic F1 in North America. His daughter is based in Los Angeles, so it is a good fit. The E-type is also tended by the Classic Team Lotus squad.

Mallorca win

Seb Perez and Gary McElhinney topped a strong entry to win the 19th Rally Isla Mallorca earlier this month in their Porsche 911. With more than a dozen UK entries in the 100-strong entry, Perez beat Kris Rosenberger's similar car by more than half a minute. Also in the final top 10 were Nick Whale (Ford Escort Mk1), Jonathan Gale (Firenze Can-Am) and Andrew Siddall (Ford Escort Mk1). Steve Perez retired with engine dramas in his Ford Escort Mk2.

Bo'ness is back

The famous Bo'ness hill climb in Scotland will be used again this summer with the Hillclimb Revival running on the weekend of September 2-3. Bo'ness has been hosting speed events since 1934 and is Scotland's oldest motorsport venue. As before, the event will be for historic cars only and Formula Juniors will be an invited part of this year's event. In 1947, Bo'ness hosted the opening round of the inaugural British Hillclimb Championship

Irish adventure

Competitors from the Guards Trophy have been invited to the Mondello Park Historic Festival on August 12-13, with a free entry and support for travel and accommodation. The pre '66 GT cars and pre '69 sports-racing cars will have two non-championship mini-enduro races for the Irish International Grand Prix Trophy, which dates back to 1929 and the road circuit races at Phoenix Park in Dublin. The organisers are hoping to attract at least 20 cars.

MRL code

Motor Racing Legends has published a code of racing ethics (CORE) for the 2023 season, detailing the standard and spirit that it expects from drivers. MRL runs a series of historic categories and sparked a review of driving standards after several incidents at the Classic Silverstone last summer. The new MRL seasons opens at the Donington Historic Festival on April 29-30 and the CORE documents can be downloaded from the MRL website.

BHRC round two

Fifty registered crews will line up for Saturday's second round of the British Historic Rally Championship, Rally North Wales. Round one winner Roger Chilman faces a quality-packed field including three-time champion Jason Pritchard, Martin McCormack and the Porsche 911s of Richard Tuthill and Seb Perez. In Yorkshire last month, Tom Walster took the fight to Chiman in a battle of the Ford Escort Mk2s.

WRC REPORT: RALLY MEXICO



Ogier performed at the top of his game



Landais (l) and a happy Ogier

RESULTS			
World Rally Championship round 3/13			
Event: Rally Mexico Where: Leon When: March 16-19			
POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Ogier/Vincent Landais	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	3h16m09.4s
2	Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+27.5s
3	Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+27.9s
4	Kalle Rovanpera/Jonne Halttunen	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+1m55.3s
5	Dani Sordo/Candido Carrera	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+2m58.8s
6	Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+12m31.5s
7	Emil Lindholm/Reeta Hamalainen	Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+13m04.4s
8	Oliver Solberg/Elliott Edmondson	Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+13m37.7s
9	Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja	Ford Puma Rally1	+15m19.6s
10	Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Maciej Szczepaniak	Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo	+15m56.6s

WRC2: Greensmith/Andersson WRC2 Challenger: Kajetanowicz/Szczepaniak WRC3: Diego Dominguez/Rogelio Penate WRC Masters: Jason Bailey/Shayne Peterson
positions: 1 Ogier 56; 2 Neuville 53; 3 Rovanpera 52; 4 Tanak 47; 5 Evans 44; 6 Craig Breen 19; etc.



Welshman Elfyn Evans was pipped to second at the last by Neuville

Sebastien Ogier is only planning to be a bit-part player in this season's World Rally Championship, the eight-time title winner adamant that he's done with full campaigns.

But while Ogier is up for a half-season and no more in 2023, there were no half-measures from the Frenchman in Mexico as he swept to a record seventh event win on the back of a typically sublime performance.

With two triumphs from two starts so far this year, Ogier now leads the standings by three points, despite non-starting in Sweden last month.

Based on Ogier's showing on the WRC's return to North America for the first time since 2020, a trio of consecutive victories is certainly within the Toyota driver's clutches when the championship resumes in Croatia next month, particularly as he will start the opening leg in Zagreb first on the road, always an advantage on Tarmac.

Leading by 35.8 seconds heading into

the final leg and quick to point to the ever-present puncture risk on central Mexico's mountain roads, Ogier was understandably a little cautious through Sunday's first three stages.

But it had been a different story heading into Saturday's second leg. Having been outgunned by Esapekka Lappi throughout Friday – the Finn taking five stage bests to Ogier's two and leading by 5.3s – Ogier knew he'd have to up his pace to peg back his rival, who'd been on fine form on only his third start with Hyundai.

"To be fighting all the time against Seb, this was not in my mind to be honest," Lappi said on Friday evening. "It's probably one of the best days of my career."

Lappi, starting sixth on the road on Friday, one place behind Ogier, edged the Frenchman to the fastest time on SS3 – the day's first stage – by 0.3s to move into the overall lead by 1.2s.

Ogier was quicker than Lappi on SS4 by 0.4s to cut his former teammate's advantage to 0.8s before Lappi took his turn to set the pace on SS5, a

performance that put him 1.4s ahead at the midday halt.

Lappi was quickest again on SS6 to extend his lead to 2.2s, only for Ogier to hit back on SS7 by 1.9s, which narrowed Lappi's lead to 0.3s.

By winning SS8 with 3.1s in hand over Ogier, Lappi increased his gap to 3.4s. And it would get better for the Finn when he went 3.5s quicker than Ogier through SS9 to grow his margin to 6.9s, although Ogier would trim Lappi's lead back to 5.3s on Friday's final stage.

But the two-horse race for victory quickly became anything but after Lappi crashed out in dramatic fashion on Saturday's first stage to leave Ogier in control.

"I think I was a bit caught out," Lappi told WRC All Live after felling a telegraph pole during his wild ride. "There was a right with a cut, then it goes straight to the left over a crest and I think I was a bit caught out with this cut. I was delayed on the entry on the left and we went wide where the exit narrows, we hit a bank which spin us out immediately and then with the rear we

hit the electricity pole, fully my mistake."

Lappi's feeling of despair in the early Saturday morning sunshine was in total contrast to the euphoria of Friday evening. "It's hard to swallow but on the other hand when you fight for the win you still need to push," the 32-year-old added.

With Lappi out, SS11 winner Ogier moved into a 27.3s lead ahead of teammate Elfyn Evans, whose margin over Thierry Neuville was 11.6s.

Sensing second place was in his grasp, Neuville clocked a trio of fastest stage times in his Hyundai to reach midday service trailing Evans by 8.7s.

But with the rerun of the Ibarra stage scrapped due to Lappi's earlier crash, SS16 provided the next opportunity for Neuville to try to close on Evans. Instead, the battling pair were subjected to an Ogier masterclass with the multiple World champion coming out on top by a staggering 8.1s after an epic performance.

"I think it's all down to tyre management," a surprised Ogier

suggested when quizzed at the stage finish. "I felt a lot that the tyre was dropping [towards] the end and I was very smooth on that, so I believe they suffered more than me."

Neuville continued his pursuit of Evans by going 2.6s faster than the Welshman on SS17. He was also quicker than his rival on SS18, despite a puncture, and again on SS19 to narrow the gap to 4.3s.

The prospect of a place swap increased when Neuville edged Evans on the



WRC in Mexico: it is prickly stuff...



Lappi had been the star performer for Hyundai for the opening day and a half before disaster struck



Belgian Hyundai man Neuville came out on top in his battle for second place with the Toyota of Evans

heavily rutted Sunday-opening Las Dunas superspecial by 0.2s. But on the subsequent 22 miles of Otates, the rally's longest stage, Evans was 1.7s faster than his Hyundai-driving rival, who reported slowing to avoid a couple of dogs on the road.

That meant the gap between the pair was 5.8s with two stages left. But before the penultimate 7.8-mile San Diego test, Evans had to turn mechanic to attempt a fix on a bent suspension arm picked up during SS20.

It got worse for Evans on a left-hander within sight of the start of SS22 when he ran wide and swiped a bank with the right rear of his Yaris. With Scott Martin co-driving, Evans gave everything to minimise any further time loss and made it through 2.7s in front of Neuville – who'd survived a big slide on a right-hander nearing the stage finish – with just the Powerstage remaining.

But by outpacing Evans on the 5.9-mile El Brinco test, Neuville took second overall behind Ogier by a mere 0.4s with the third fastest time, while a dejected Evans could do

no better than sixth on the rally's finale.

"It's not a surprise, we've been nursing a bent suspension arm since the first one this morning," Evans told WRC All Live. "We had to take it easy just to make sure we got back, it's a shame."

Knowing a Powerstage win would put him on top of the standings, Ogier forgot about punctures and threw caution to the wind on the deciding test.

"As I'm doing the next [rally in Croatia] it's better to start first on the road on Tarmac so it was important to score points [on the Powerstage]," Ogier told WRC All Live. "The car was great this weekend, it was a faultless weekend from us and the team too."

World champion Kalle Rovanpera finished fourth with a damaged Toyota after he slid wide on a Powerstage right-hander.

Hyundai's Dani Sordo was fifth after a Friday puncture as WRC2 winner Gus Greensmith completed the top six. Emil Lindholm took the WRC2 runner-up spot in seventh with Oliver Solberg next up despite his Fabia dropping onto

three cylinders on the penultimate stage following a heavy hit through a compression.

Ott Tänak shrugged off a damper issue to take second on the Powerstage on his way to a disconsolate ninth place following his turbo failure on Friday morning's first test (*see sidebar*). Kajetan Kajetanowicz completed the top 10 on his second Rally Mexico start.

A broken alternator belt cost Adrien Fourmaux seventh and the runner-up spot in WRC2 although stage-side repairs by the Frenchman and co-driver Alexandre Coria restored their M-Sport Ford Fiesta to full working order, but not before almost 19 minutes were lost.

Pierre-Louis Loubet and M-Sport team-mate Jourdan Serderidis both failed to complete what was a disastrous SS3 for the British team following Tänak's troubles. Loubet also failed to get through Saturday and lost more time with a spin and puncture on Sunday.

Takamoto Katsuta crashed on Friday – his 30th birthday – but returned with a fixed Yaris on Saturday alongside Irish co-driver Aaron Johnston.

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull Content Pool

STRONG START A FALSE DAWN FOR M-SPORT'S TANAK

Ott Tänak arrived in Mexico a winner and the World championship leader following his Rally Sweden triumph last month.

And M-Sport's main man was a winner again, not once, but twice on the streets of Guanajuato, home to a double-use superspecial on Thursday evening.

Formed of cobblestone streets and a section in an old silver mine tunnel, the only stage to take place within a UNESCO World Heritage Site always proves a challenge, with grip lacking due to the use of gravel tyres and evening moisture forming on the already slippery surface.

After going fastest on the first run through the 0.7-mile stage with a 58.0s charge to outgun Kalle Rovanpera by 0.8s, Tänak went quicker still when the stage was repeated a few moments later. This time, the Estonian took 56.2s to get through as Rovanpera and Esapekka Lappi placed equal second, 0.9s

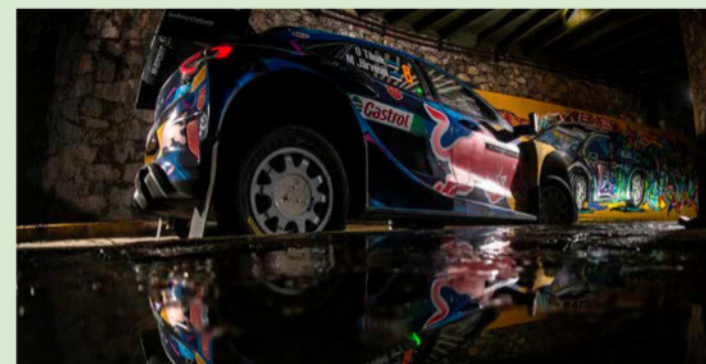
slower than Tänak.

"Today was a bit of fun but tomorrow is the job," 35-year-old Tänak said. "It's not going to be easy [opening the road] but we need to maximise. I've never driven the car on gravel so there's a lot to discover but I have high hopes."

Tänak's Guanajuato heroics meant he headed into Friday's opener leading by 1.7s. But that advantage evaporated approximately halfway through 18 miles of El Chocolate thanks to his Ford Puma's turbo failing.

With two stages to go until service in Leon, Tänak was more than 12 minutes off the lead when his mechanics got to work on restoring the once-fast Ford to full working order.

"It was quite a struggle [clearing the road] and the issue came like instant," the 2019 World champion said. "I hoped at least it was just a loose pipe but as I saw this wasn't the case, I knew it was quite shit."



Guanajuato was a false dawn for M-Sport hope Ott Tänak

GREENSMITH: BACK TO THE TOP

Gus Greensmith made an instant impact on his return to the WRC's second tier for the first time since 2019 with victory.

Still adapting to Toksport's Skoda Fabia RS Rally2, Greensmith outpaced his team-mate and defending champion Emil Lindholm – at the wheel of a previous-generation Fabia – on SS6 to take a lead he wouldn't relinquish, not that he had it easy.

Adrien Fourmaux, driving for Greensmith's former team M-Sport, was 8.5s behind at Friday's overnight halt and intent on catching the Manchester driver.

But a late arrival at the start of Saturday's opening test earned Fourmaux a 10-second penalty.

With Esapekka Lappi's crash on SS11 neutralising the run before the WRC2 drivers got their turn – and leading to SS12 and SS13 being for Rally1 crews only – it wasn't until SS14 when battle properly resumed.

When Fourmaux almost rolled on SS18, Greensmith was able to complete Saturday's leg 31.6s in front of the Frenchman with Lindholm 6.0s behind in third.

With Fourmaux stopping to fix a bust alternator on SS21, Greensmith was in the clear as Lindholm took second. Oliver Solberg, with Elliott Edmondson co-driving, nursed his down-on-power Fabia to third following a spin and a puncture on day one.



Greensmith dominated WRC2 in his Toksport Skoda Fabia



NATIONAL HOT RODS

2022-2023 English Points

RND	WHEN	WHERE
8	March 12	Aldershot
9	March 26	Hednesford
10	April 7	Skegness
11	April 10	Ipswich
12	April 30	Aldershot
13	May 13	Ipswich
14	May 29	Hednesford

NATIONAL HOT RODS

2023-2024 English Points

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	July 23	Aldershot
2	August 27	Great Yarmouth
3	August 28	Ipswich
4	September 17	Hednesford
5	October 1	Aldershot
6	October 22	Hednesford
7	November 4	Ipswich

OTHER MAJOR EVENTS

RND	WHEN	WHERE
European Championship	April 22-23	Lochgeley
Angie Rowe Thunder 500	June 17	Ipswich
National Hot Rod World Final	July 2-3	Ipswich
National Championship	Aug 5-6	Hednesford
British Championship	Sept 23-24	Tullyroan
Best in Britain	Dec 3	Hednesford

BriSCA F1

2022-2023 World qualifiers

RND	WHEN	WHERE
9	April 15	King's Lynn
10	April 22	Mildenhall
11	April 23	Northampton
12	April 30	Buxton
13	May 1	Hednesford
14	May 6	Skegness
15	June 4	Sheffield
16	June 17	Ipswich
17	June 24	Bradford

BriSCA F1

2023-2024 World qualifiers

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	September 16	Buxton
2	October 7	Skegness
3	October 14	Bradford
4	October 21	King's Lynn
5	October 29	Northampton
6	November 5	Hednesford

BriSCA F1

2023 National Points Championship

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	August 27	Sheffield
2	September 16	Buxton
3	September 30	King's Lynn
4	October 7	Skegness
5	October 8	Skegness
6	October 14	Bradford
7	October 21	King's Lynn
8	October 29	Northampton
9	November 5	Hednesford

OTHER MAJOR EVENTS

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
UK Open Championship	May 7	Skegness
European Championship	June 11	Mildenhall
British Championship	July 23	Hednesford
World Final semi-final 1	July 29	Mildenhall
World Final semi-final 2	August 5	Buxton
BriSCA F1 World Final	September 9	Northampton
BriSCA F1 World Masters	September 10	Northampton
National Points Finale	November 11	Bradford
BriSCA F1 Gala Night	November 18	Skegness

BriSCA FORMULA 2

2023-2024 English Points

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	March 4	King's Lynn
2	March 11	Mildenhall
3	March 26	Hednesford
4	April 9	Bristol
5	April 16	Sheffield
6	April 29	Northampton
7	May 7	Bradford
8	June 3	Crimond
9	June 4	Cowdenbeath
10	June 17	Buxton
11	June 18	St Day
12	June 19	Taunton
13	June 25	Aldershot
14	July 13	Skegness

OTHER MAJOR EVENTS

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
British Championship	May 13	Cowdenbeath
Scottish Championship	June 4	Cowdenbeath
European Championship	June 11	Mildenhall
UK Championship	July 9	Skegness
World Final semi-finals	August 6	Bristol
English Open	August 13	St Day
World of Shale	August 28	Northampton
World Final	Sept 2-3	Nutts Corner



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info@spedeworth.co.uk
 01252 322920

CALENDAR 2023

WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

RND	WHEN	WHERE
EURO	May 20-21	Nyirad, Hungary
1	June 17-18	Hell, Norway*
2	July 1-2	Holjes, Sweden*
3	July 22-23	Lydden Hill, UK
4	August 5-6	Mettet, Belgium*
5	August 26-27	Montalegre, Portugal*
6	September 9-10	Estering, Germany*
7	October 21-22	Cape Town, South Africa
8	November 25-26	Asia (TBC)

* = includes European Championship

BRITISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	April 8	Lydden Hill
2	April 10	Lydden Hill
3	June 3	Mondello Park
4	June 4	Mondello Park
5	July 22-23	Lydden Hill
6	August 19	Pembrey
7	August 20	Pembrey
8	October 14-15	Dreux, France
9	November 4	Lydden Hill
10	November 5	Lydden Hill

BTRDA RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	March 26	Blyton Park
2	April 22	Pembrey
3	April 23	Pembrey
4	July 2	Blyton Park
5	July 29	Lydden Hill
6	September 2	Pembrey
7	September 3	Pembrey
8	October 22	Knockhill

IRISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	March 4	Mondello Park
2	March 5	Mondello Park
3	June 3	Mondello Park
4	June 4	Mondello Park
5	August 19	Pembrey
6	August 20	Pembrey
7	November 18	Mondello Park
8	November 19	Mondello Park
9	December 10	Mondello Park

BRITISH HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
1	April 22-23	Prescott
2	April 29	Craigantlet
3	May 7	Harewood
4	May 27-28	Gurston Down
5	June 3-4	Shelsley Walsh
6	June 17-18	Doune
7	July 1-2	Harewood
8	July 19	Bouley Bay, Jersey
9	July 22	Val des Terres, Guernsey
10	July 29-30	Wiscombe Park
11	August 12-13	Shelsley Walsh
12	August 26-27	Loton Park
13	September 2-3	Prescott
14	September 23-24	Loton Park

BRITISH SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
1	March 25	Cadwell Park
2	April 1-2	Anglesey
3	May 13-14	Blyton Park
4	May 20	Lydden Hill
5	June 3-4	Pembrey
6	July 15	Lydden Hill
7	August 5-6	Kirkistown
8	August 26-27	Snetterton
9	September 9-10	Pembrey
10	September 23-24	Blyton Park
11	Sept 30-Oct 1	Anglesey
12	October 8	Knockhill
13	October 14	Castle Combe

BTDA SPORTING TRIALS

RND	WHEN	WHERE
1	January 29	JB Taylor, Otham
2	February 19	Geoff Taylor, Norton
3	March 4	Presidents Trial, Langrish
4	March 5	Walsingham, Buriton
5	March 18	Whiteman's, NI
6	March 19	Peter Blankstone, Shelsley Walsh
7	March 25	Stuart Butterfield, TBC
8	March 26	Stonetrough, TBC
9	April 16	Longnor, Derbyshire,
10	April 30	Jiggers' Jug, TBC
11	May 1	Raymond Baxter, TBC
12	May 14	Four Turnings, Cornwall
13	June 4	Jacobean, Long Compton
14	September 3	Robin Jager, TBC
15	September 9	Robin Alexander, Cornwall
16	September 10	David Ayres, Cornwall
17	September 24	Peter Fear, Linton
18	October 8	John Southern, TBC
19	October 15	Mercian, Long Compton
20	October 28	English Visitors, Larne, NI
21	October 29	Tweeds, Larne, NI
22	November 5	Tulleys, Crawley
23	November 12	The Fedden, TBC
24	November 19	Johnson, TBC
25	December 3	Gloucester, Frochester

DRAG RACING

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
Festival of Power	April 7-9	Santa Pod
Springspeed National	April 29-May 1	Santa Pod
Doorslammers	May 19-21	Santa Pod
FIA Main Event	May 26-29	Santa Pod
Sportsman Nationals	June 17-18	Santa Pod
Summer Nationals	July 1-2	Santa Pod
Euro Nationals	July 28-30	Santa Pod
Greenlight Nationals	August 19-20	Santa Pod
FIA Euro Finals	September 7-10	Santa Pod
Straightliners Finals	October 15	Santa Pod

OTHER MAJOR EVENTS

MTG	WHEN	WHERE
Rallyday	July 1	Castle Combe
Festival of Speed	July 13-16	Goodwood
Classic Nostalgia	July 22-23	Shelsley Walsh



FEATURE

CHRIS INGRAM:

THE UNRELENTING DESIRE TO REACH THE RALLYING PINNACLE

Matt James puts the questions to the battling Briton, the winner of the 2019 European Rally Championship, who has his eyes on the sport's summit



Ingram has his eyes on the WRC

If top-line rally seats and titles were handed out for dedication, then Chris Ingram would already be firmly ensconced in a World Rally Championship drive and would be pushing hard to gain global recognition.

However, the 28-year-old Briton has not had the breaks despite performing at every level of the mixed-surface discipline he has tackled. From a glittering early career in the junior learning category, F1000, the Mancunian has turned the heads of manufacturers along the way, but the cards never seem to fall for him.

The highlight of his career to date was a dramatic triumph in the European Rally Championship in 2019, which was taken in the most nail-biting of circumstances, as you can read here.

That should have been the springboard he needed, but Covid and funding issues hit almost as soon as he had turned his career into its massive upward swing. Undeterred, he has battled on and has corralled the support of a dedicated group of enthusiasts to help him maintain his path to the top.

This season, he is contesting the WRC2 contest in a Toksport Skoda Fabia and began his campaign with sixth place in the division in an outmoded version of the Fabia on the Monte Carlo Rally.

That has prompted another consolidated push for him to get himself into a more up-do-date machine for the remaining rounds. Nothing comes easy to Ingram, but he refuses to give up.

For details of how to help Ingram's push to the top of rallying, it is worth checking out his rallywarrior.com website to see the different ways to support him.

Question: How did the passion for rallying ignite in you? What are your first memories of the sport?

James Hilton

Via email

Chris Ingram: "My dad Jon used to compete in the 1980s in road rallies. He was really quick, but he didn't take it seriously. Then he got back into it when I was a kid and he took me along to watch a rally when I was about eight years old and I was obsessed since then. It blew me away and it has been my biggest passion ever since."

MN: So did your dad help you out to get going in the sport himself?

CI: "Yes, dad helped me out initially. He gave me my first push into the sport and then I just ran with it."

MN: So who was your boyhood hero? Who was the poster on Ingram Junior's wall?

CI: "Sebastien Loeb, definitely. Colin

McRae and Richard Burns would have been, I guess, but they were just a bit before my time. Loeb was absolutely dominating as my interest in the sport grew."

MN sets the scene: Ingram took to the stages in the junior-focused F1000 class in 2009 in a Citroen C1 and became a serial class winner in his first full campaign over the next two seasons.

Question: Success seemed to come pretty easily to you in the F1000 series straight away. What do you put that down to? Were you able to hone your driving skills away from the events?

George Hobbs

Via email

CI: "I began when I was 15. I just seemed to click with it straight away. I had quite a natural affinity with the car and it just came to me. Obviously, I wasn't driving on the roads at that stage, and so my seat time was limited to the events we took part in. Only very rarely would I be able to drive the car away from the events – there was no private ground for me to go testing on, unlike some."

"It did come naturally to me and I was so dedicated to it and focused on it. I would get myself so pumped up with the nerves and with the adrenaline and it would really help me focus."

MN: So you knew, even at that stage, that rallying was going to be your destiny?

CI: "I didn't really ever look too far into the future when I was a kid. It was only when I got onto the European scene and I got into the European Rally Championship and I got my first big break with Peugeot [to run a factory 208 R2 in 2014] and I started getting some big results and impressing important people, that is when I started to think that I might have a big chance in the sport."

"When I was younger, if I had started out with the stated aim of wanting to be a World or European champion, then that would have put too much pressure on myself. I just loved rallying and everything about it when I was young, it wasn't about the future back then. I have never seen rallying as a hobby though: it has always been way more than that."

MN sets the scene: Ingram won the Renault Sport R2 Twingo Trophy on his graduation to the British Rally Championship scene in 2012, which gave him an opportunity to contest Rallye du Var at the end of that season in an R3 car.

Question: Renault played a part in your early career, but do you think the lack of single-make junior categories is hurting the progression of young drivers today?

Steven Nye

Via email

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, Red Bull Content Pool, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Twingo success in 2012 was a Euro launchpad

CI: “In history, there has always been a very successful single-make cup, but there hasn’t been for a good few years now.

“In truth, there isn’t the amount of people rallying now to justify a one-make cup, as important as they might have been in the past to the progression of up-and-coming drivers. I am not sure that there is the level of interest around at the moment to make it sustainable for the manufacturers to get involved. Look at the British Rally Championship – there were only 15 cars on the opening Malcolm Wilson Rally recently...”

MN: Did you realise, even from your early stages, that it was important to be aligned to a manufacturer?

CI: “Being along with a manufacturer was definitely the way for me to go in the early steps of my career because there was a prize drive along with it. When I did the Renault Twingo, I got to go to France to rally as a reward.

“Going to do Rallye du Var in November 2012, it really opened my eyes to how strong the European rallying was. Without

that prize drive, it would have been a long journey to get out to Europe and experience those events. We realised it was seriously competitive, there were hundreds of people in each class and you had to perform well to make an impact.”

MN: Do you think a lot of the British guys are blind to the strength of the competition on the continent?

CI: “That is definitely true. Apart from Elfyn Evans, I can’t think of anyone else from the UK who has gone and done well in Europe. There can be a ladder of progression in Europe, whereas you don’t get a lot for winning in the UK... and the homegrown guys who do win the British prizes have all been Irish!”

MN sets the scene: In a one-off entry at the end of the 2015 season, Ingram entered Wales Rally GB in a WRC3 Citroen DS3. He was running second close to the end when his car failed on a road-section watersplash...

Question: Was Wales Rally GB in 2015 the result that got away? It was looking like a breakthrough!

Jonathan Astbury
Via email

CI: “Looking back, it really doesn’t matter and I am not sure it would have changed anything. I really wish I could go and do Rally GB now with the experience I have gained and the pace I have got now.”

MN: But at that point, and having smashed it for almost all of the stages, you must have been heartbroken...

CI: “I was second in the JWRC on my debut and that would have been a great result. It wasn’t a watersplash that got me, it was more of an oversized puddle on the road section. It just got into the electrics and the car wouldn’t restart so it was game

continued on page 20

“Rally driving just seemed to come naturally”

Chris Ingram



Ingram’s learning stages in his Renault Twingo didn’t always follow a smooth path, as we see here...

FEATURE



Ingram (r) thought he'd lost ERC title

over. It was just so unlucky. Touch wood, I have never had anything as cruel as that happen to me since. It was heart-breaking, but it was a long time ago."

MN sets the scene: Ingram scored his European Rally title success after a roller coaster in 2019. After a puncture on the final stage of the last rally in Hungary, he thought his shot at the crown was gone until a rival was afflicted by exactly the same issue. Although he lost out on the Junior crown (and the huge cash jackpot which came with it) that season, he did become the first Brit to win the ERC title since Vic Elford 52 years previously.

Question: Will you ever defend your European Rally title, which you won in 2019, or was that a one-time thing?

Victor Kyula

Via Twitter

CI: "I would like to, but I have to keep aiming for more and aiming higher. When I am getting older, maybe I could go back to the European Rally Championship but not just now."

MN: Did you realise what a significant achievement that was? You went from the

ultimate despair to the ultimate joy: that must have been a huge roller coaster...

CI: "It was a mental event on Rally Hungary because there were so many punctures because the rally was half-gravel but slick tyres were the right ones to have, so many people were afflicted. You just couldn't avoid them – it was just pot luck."

MN: So when you got your deflation right at the end, did you think it was all over for you, your title dreams were dashed?

CI: "I still thought there might be a slim chance. When we had our puncture, we opted not to stop and change it. We drove something like 14 kilometres on a flat tyre. It was so foggy, wet and dark, I knew that if we had stopped to change the tyre it would have been a nightmare and we would have definitely lost more time. I reckoned that the fog would have slowed everyone down anyway, so it was a calculated risk. I genuinely thought that we had still won at the end but then someone else had an unbelievable time through the last stage and jumped ahead of us. All we had to do was finish in the top three, but this time put us down to

fourth. It all rested on what [Citroen title rival] Alexey Lukyanuk could do on the final stage. That's when my heart started to sink and I knew the situation was unbelievable. I thought we had just missed it. And then the news came through that Alexey had had a puncture too..."

"It was probably the most tense few minutes of my career because I knew that if I hadn't have won that title, it was probably the end of my career. I was in such a rut in terms of finances and things just to compete in those final few rounds. I just couldn't see a way forward if I had not have won the crown."

MN: You also lost the Junior ERC title by the tiniest of margins during that season too...

CI: "Yes I missed out by 0.3s. The junior title only ran across the opening six rounds in the year and it had finished earlier than Rally Hungary. There was a 100,000 Euro prize for the Junior ERC title, and I lost out by three-tenths of second... and that money would have funded my last two rounds of the main ERC campaign and plenty more. It was one of the cruellest

twists of the season, and then when we claimed the overall title it was a feeling of just the biggest relief. When you have won the European title, you don't care about that lost cash then..."

MN: Everyone made a big thing about you being the first Brit for 52 years – since Vic Elford – to win the ERC title. Was that something that was on your mind when you got to the end of the event?

CI: "It was on my mind and that's because Vic Elford is such a legend. He sent a message through one of your journalists, Graham Lister, to say congratulations. That was such a nice touch. That made it even more special."

Question: Within all your success winning in junior championships, who was the hardest most consistent competitor you came up against? **Malcolm McDonald Proudlock** **Via Facebook**

CI: "I would say, on talent alone, Jari Huttunen. We had some epic battles when we were up against him in Opel Adams in the European Championship in 2017. I ended up winning three rounds

and he won one. But it was very close on every rally, and now we have had some great battles in the WRC2 arena too. He has had some experience in Rally1 cars with Hyundai and M-Sport and he has probably done a lot more rallies than I have. We have been fighting so closely."

MN: Why is he so good?

CI: "I would like to say we are both naturally talented, whereas some drivers might not be as natural but they get on the pace because there are out every weekend. That's helped them to speed up."

Question: Tarmac, snow or gravel – which surface do you prefer? And which is the rally stage you enjoy the most?

Damien Doherty

Via email

CI: "I honestly don't have any preference on the surface. I enjoy all of them just the same. I wouldn't say I am a specialist, and I would say I am equal on any surface."

"The best stage would be a split between the Volcano Ridge stage – Sete Cidades – on the Azores Rally and the Col de Turini on the Monte Carlo

"My heart sank as I thought we had lost the chance of the title"

Chris Ingram



Factory chance came for Ingram with Peugeot in an R2 car in 2014



Ingram's first campaign in an R5 SKoda Fabia came in Europe in 2018



Ingram adores the challenge of the Azores Rally, here in 2016

Rally in the dark. It is just so iconic.”

MN sets the scene: During lockdown through the Covid period, Chris Ingram spoke out about the mental health struggles he had been through to keep the momentum up behind his rallying career and the pressures of finding funding and putting together his programmes.

Question: *You were quite open and very brave to talk about your mental health struggles. Did you ever get any help and what advice would you give to any other driver – be that in racing or rallying – if they are beginning to struggle?*

Jack Crowther
Via email

CI: “I did get help from a sports therapist when I wasn’t competing during the Covid times. Definitely the most courageous thing you can do is admit that you are struggling and let people know that you need to get help and you need to talk. You shouldn’t bottle it up.

“It seems me speaking out did have an impact across many drivers throughout the sport, I was surprised because not many people got in touch with me initially commenting.”

MN: It is interesting, but a large number of other drivers might not speak out for fear of it showing a sign of weakness...

CI: “That is so true. I thought, but speaking out, it would go one of two ways. People might have thought I was an absolute hero for talking about it because loads of people suffer in silence, but then there are people who have never experienced it or come into contact with it and they simply just don’t get it. Those are the people that might not have understood and just thought ‘well, I am not going to go anywhere near him...’

“It is just sad that no-one still is really talking about it.”

continued on page 22



Ingram was a class winner on Rally GB in ‘17

FEATURE



The 2019 season was one of many highs for Chris Ingram



A moment he thought that wouldn't happen: Ingram (r) and co-driver Ross Whittock celebrate title

Question: *Do you think the lack of a Rally GB – in any guise – will hurt the prospects of up-and-coming British drivers?*

Rod Stevenson
Via email

CI: “Yes, I think it will. As a nation we all need to get behind our drivers more than we do. We just need to get behind the sport and our flag-bearers as much as we can, and obviously a UK round of the World Rally Championship is a massive step towards that.”

“But, off the back of that, you need a successful and well-publicised British Rally Championship that has to sit below that. That is crucial for the sport’s future and we have all got to do all that we possibly can. It can stem from the bottom up and then we can have a showpiece event sitting at the head of all of that.”

Question: *In your view, what is the best place to go rallying - I hear you are a big fan of the Azores?*

Kate Banks
Via email

CI: “The Azores is amazing. I am literally the Harry Styles of the Azores! In Manchester, nobody knows who I am but I can go to the Azores or even the Czech Republic and walk down the road and people would ask me for a selfie. It is mental.”

“In any restaurant, people would come and ask me for a picture, no matter how young or old they were. If it is a little fan girl or if it is an old bloke, in the Azores, I am probably one of the most well-recognised people there. They treat you like a hero and they have such a passion for rallying, they really love it there. It is like a dream place for rallying. You are literally treated like a pop star and, to go along with that, the stages are unbelievably good as well. If you stand and watch on that Volcano Stage, it just seems so unreal. There is nothing else like it and the people are so supportive and friendly.”

Question: *The WRC2 division is fierce with former Rally1 drivers stepping back to tackle it as well as all the up-and-coming talent. What would be a satisfying result for you at the end of the year?*

Hannah Blezard
Via email

CI: “The absolute minimum for me would be a top-three finish in the championship and to win at least one round.”

MN: You must look at the WRC2 entry list and realise that you are up against some of the very best up-and-coming talents – and some who have already proven themselves at the top level...



Soaking up the atmosphere on the Monte Carlo Rally in 2022



Brit Ingram has had a long partnership with Toksport

CI: “There is also a lot of factory support in the WRC2 level as well, so it is even more difficult when you are up against drivers like Andreas Mikkelsen, Skoda’s factory driver, or Teemu Suninen, Hyundai’s factory driver. I am turning up with my hard-earned sponsorship and I am trying to take them on, so it is tough. It is very hard to target a particular result, it is just about keeping on progressing and showing my pace and trying to get myself into the best position to be on a level playing field with them.”
MN: That is why it is such a good proving ground though, because if you can make an impact there, you can turn around to the top teams and say ‘look who I have beaten...’
CI: “That is exactly right, and that is the plan. It puts the pressure on, but I am never going to get the chance in Rally1 unless I can beat those guys. And if I can, then why shouldn’t I get a chance in Rally1 if I have proven myself despite my lack of experience compared to them.”

Question: How tough is it always having to look for money – could you be a better driver if driving was your only focus?
Richard Jones
Via email
CI: “Absolutely I could be better if the money issue wasn’t there. I am my own agent and fundraiser before I am a driver.”

“I would love to drive a Lancia 037”
Chris Ingram

I would say 90%-95% of my energy has to go into getting myself out there and on the start ramp in the first place. So the questioner is totally right, I could focus more, but I am not complaining. I have got to do my best with the cards I have been dealt and I will never give up.”
MN: And you have been quite inventive in looking for ways of raising money too...
CI: “I am very grateful to have had a lot of loyal supporters – and some of them are people I have not even met from social media. They have followed me loyally for years. A lot of people suggested I set up the crowdfunding scheme when I was back in the ERC in 2019 and then again this year when times are really tough with the world. I know I can’t give up on it. The amount of people who have chipped in goes to show that the support is amazing out there. Why shouldn’t I do a crowdfunding campaign and give prizes away when there’s so many people who want to help?”
“I have also sold shares in my company Rally Warrior so hopefully when I get a big contract one day, the people can start making some money back.”

Question: Other than a current works Rally1 car, is there any other rally car you would like to have driven but haven’t? You have been to Goodwood, so you must have seen some things there that whetted your appetite...
Lola Barclay
Via email
CI: “I would love to drive a Lancia 037, I just think they are so iconic. Or a Lancia Stratos... I would really love to do some historic rallying, so watch this space...”
Question: There was talk of you looking at opportunities in Extreme E. Is this something that still interests you? Are you interested in other branches of motorsport?
Malcolm Munt
Via email

CI: “My passion is WRC, but I have tried to get my name into the hat for Extreme E. At the moment, all the male drives are taken up by all the rally legends or rallycross guys. They all seem to me to be over 50 – maybe I am just a bit too young. Maybe I would have to change my gender to get a drive...
“I love driving and competing and WRC is where my heart is, but I would look at any opportunities. I tested a Porsche Carrera Cup car last year too. I did a day for one of my sponsors who backs one of the teams...”
MN: How was that? Did you enjoy that?
CI: “I did really like that, but it would clearly be more fun when there were 20 other cars all around you.”
MN: And what was it like being in a car on your own with no co-driver sat next to you...
CI: “I just enjoyed the peace and quiet!”

Question: What advice would you give to a young Chris Ingram if you met him today?
Russell Scobbie
Via email
CI: “How old?”
MN: Say an early teenager when you were just starting out in your rally journey in F1000...
CI: “I would say that I wouldn’t really change anything and I wouldn’t do anything differently. I would maybe tell myself to be more assertive with people. You can still be a nice guy, but you shouldn’t let anyone take the mick.
“Keep going for it but don’t let anyone take advantage of your kindness.”

Question: How close have you been to driving a Rally1 car?
Graham Johnson
Via email
CI: “Closer than I have ever been but still I have got to make it count this year and I have got to get the opportunity to compete at the top in WRC2 and then I will go from there.” ■



Flying high for WRC2 Junior success in Portugal during 2022 season



Ingram took sixth in the WRC2 division on this year’s Monte Carlo

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Our 12-page special breaks down the barriers to motorsport competition, **starts p15**

Brackley-based team plots evolution to regain lost ground to Red Bull and Ferrari

MERCEDES AIMS TO BOUNCE BACK BY STICKING TO DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Wraps came off the new Mercedes W14 racer

By Matt James

Mercedes F1 bosses say the team's new W14 design has ironed out the flaws from its 2022 challenger and will give drivers Lewis Hamilton and George Russell the chance to fight for grand prix wins.

The team slipped to third in the constructors' chase last year after eight straight constructors' titles. The 2022 W13 was prone to bouncing in the early part of the campaign but work by engineers ironed out the phenomenon by the end of the campaign.

Now the new W14 has taken design philosophies from the previous machine and team chiefs say it will be a step forward.

Technical director Mike Elliott said: "At times last year, we were questioning ourselves and saying: 'Do we have to tear it all up and start again?' But you know if you do that, you are going to go backwards. Although we had problems last year, we know there is a lot of goodness in the car."

"We've looked at the problems we had last year and how best to ensure we solved them."

Full story, page 4



Lewis Hamilton

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NEWS**

PREVIEW

**STARS TO
SHINE AT
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We look ahead to the historic showpiece, p14



INTERVIEW

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RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Martin Walsh

WEST CORK RALLY: IRISH TARMAC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP BY MARTIN WALSH MARCH 18-19



Champ Josh Moffett withstood pressure



A second-day charge came from Barrable

JOSH MOFFETT BEATS HIS RIVALS AND THE RAIN FOR WEST CORK VICTORY

Josh Moffett's domination of Irish rallying was tested to the limit on the West Cork Rally where his chief rivals provided stern opposition.

Moffett and co-driver Andy Hayes overcame both challenges and also that of the weather, in particular a very wet second day, to claim an 8.9-second victory and back-to-back wins in Clonakilty. Robert Barrable and the experienced Gordon Noble brought their Citroen C3 Rally2 home in second, 42.7s ahead of Meirion Evans and Jonathan Jackson (VW Polo GTi R5).

Not for the first time, tyre choice proved crucial and once Moffett had made the correct selection, he carved his way from fourth to first and duly took control of his own destiny. His Galway nemesis Evans made the best start, finding what he described as a nice rhythm over the opening pair of stages at Clogagh and Ballinascarthy where initially Sam Moffett (Hyundai i20 N Rally2) was his closest pursuer only to be replaced by Callum Devine (VW Polo GTi R5), who was best on SS2 and slotted in 2.9s behind Welshman Evans.

Barrable held an early third place with Josh Moffett 8.2s off the lead and down in fourth

place as he reckoned he should have been on wet tyres. Gareth MacHale bowed out when his VW Polo GTi R5 hit a stone bank on the second stage.

Shod with the correct compound tyre, Josh Moffett found the groove immediately, deposing Evans as rally leader and after two strong performances on the repeat of the two stages he led the Welshman by 7.1s with Devine a mere fraction of a second further behind. The slippery conditions brought the demise of Desi Henry when his Citroen C3 Rally2 slipped off the road, an experience that Cathan McCourt was fortunate not to replicate when he spun his Citroen, costing him a 40s time loss and a damaged rear bumper.

The afternoon stages were a double run over the renowned Ring stage and the returning Dunworley test. Leader Moffett had found the right groove and went on to stretch his lead to 18.6s over Evans. However, the Welshman was far from downbeat, though a low setting sun on the day's final stage caused some discomfort. A slide on the grass was a timely reminder to Devine that positions are fickle and he was 9.4s further back.

In his own words, Barrable kept tipping away while a beleaguered Sam Moffett was at a loss to understand why his efforts were not reflected in his stage times, irrespective of a spin on the Ring stage. The overnight top 10 featured the Citroen quartet of Jonny Greer, David Kelly, McCourt and Owen Murphy and the Escort of Gary Kiernan.

Rain was the main constant through Sunday's six stages but few could have predicted what unfolded. Although Moffett remained at the helm, it was the pulsating charge from Barrable that delivered edge-of-the-seat drama. He was quickest on all three stages of the loop to move into second, 10.3s behind Moffett who remained calm after he analysed his performance at the service park.

Evans didn't have the perfect tyre choice and experienced the odd slide to slip 24s behind Moffett. Devine overshot on SS10 and seemed to be lacking in confidence as he became detached from the leading trio; Sam Moffett admitted he couldn't push and slipped behind Greer. Kelly crashed out on Sam's Cross (SS10). Meanwhile, McCourt was trying out new dampers and settings. Murphy struggled

with wiper issues and a misted windscreen. Top two-wheel-drive exponent Kiernan was ninth as most of his rivals fell by the wayside. Local driver Jason McSweeney, in his right-hand-drive Ford Fiesta R5, revelled in the wet conditions to complete the top 10.

On the first stage of the final loop Moffett posted the best time but the gain over Barrable was only fractional. The tension increased when Barrable cut the deficit to 6.5s and everything hinged on the final stage, the second run over Ardfield. Along the heavily misted and foggy coastline Moffett kept sight of the target and delivered a performance that secured the laurels. Barrable and Evans completed the podium. Devine lost more time on his way to fourth ahead of Greer, Sam Moffett and McSweeney. McCourt crashed on the penultimate stage and Murphy beached his Citroen for 17 minutes on SS11 before eventually finishing well down the order. After losing three minutes with a puncture on the very first stage and dropping to 143rd William Creighton (Ford Fiesta) made a superb recovery to finish 11th. A softening of the suspension for Sunday's stages had the desired effect.

RESULTS

Irish Tarmac Championship, round 2

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes	Hyundai i20 R5	2h00m19.6s
2	Robert Barrable/Gordon Noble	Citroen C3 Rally2	+8.9s
3	Merion Evans/Jonathan Jackson	VW Polo GTi R5	+51.6s
4	Callum Devine/Noel O'Sullivan	VW Polo GTi R5	+1m16.9s
5	Jonny Greer/Niall Burns	Citroen C3 Rally2	+1m20.0s
6	Sam Moffett/Keith Moriarty	Hyundai i20 N Rally2	+1m54.5s
7	Jason McSweeney/Liam Brennan	Ford Fiesta R5	+8m04.8s
8	Gary Kiernan/Cathal Mulgrew	Ford Escort	+8m07.2s
9	Aaron MacHale/Derek Brannigan	VW Polo GTi R5	+9m00.6s
10	Cal McCarthy/Eric Calnan	Citroen C3 Rally2	+9m37.1s

Class winners: Devine/O'Sullivan; William Creighton/Liam Regan (Ford Fiesta); Keelan Grogan/Ayrton Sherlock (Peugeot 208); Billy McCarthy/John Falvey (Nissan Micra); Kevin Hickey/Derry Healy (Ford Escort); Seamus Ronan/Aoife Ronan (Honda Civic); Jack Shanahan/Micky Walsh (Toyota Corolla); Mickey Conlon/Paul McPhillips (Ford Escort); Cian Walsh/Dylan Doonan (Toyota Corolla); John Bonner/Johnny Baird (Ford Escort); Conor McCarthy/Gavin Sheehan (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); Seamus O'Donovan/Daniel O'Donovan (Honda Civic); McSweeney/Brennan; Barry McIntyre/Conor O'Connell (Honda Civic); George Swanton/Labhaioise Hyland (Ford Escort); Duncan Williams/Cuy Weaver (Ford Escort); Ray Breen/Michael Maher (Subaru Legacy).



Gary Kiernan was spectacular on his way to eighth spot

CLASSES



Williams pushed hard for the historic class victory

Williams tops an Escort lock-out in historic class

Gary Kiernan (Ford Escort) won the Modified category but didn't enjoy the final day when all his major opposition fell by the wayside.

Daniel McKenna (Escort) led initially before Kevin Eves had a brief tenure at the top that ended when his

Toyota Corolla hit a stone that burst the brake pipe and he rejoined under Rally2. Kiernan moved in front following strong performances on Saturday's closing pair of stages that gave him a 4.9-second buffer over an untroubled McKenna. The second

day was a war of attrition as differential woes ended McKenna's run, Chris Armstrong also retired leaving Frank Kelly and Barry Meade to complete the top three.

Shropshire's Duncan Williams (Ford Escort) netted the Historic category after Neil

Williams lost his grip on the rally – a 52.9s lead – when he had to stop and change a punctured front wheel on SS11. The Escorts of Wayne Jones and Tom Clark completed the podium positions. World Rally driver Craig Breen retired his Sierra

Cosworth with fuel issues towards the end of day one and while he rejoined on Sunday, a repeat of the problem forced him out once more. Local ace Darragh O'Donovan took his Honda Civic to an emphatic 4m26s victory in the Junior section.

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Steve Jones

SILVERSTONE: CSCC BY STEVE WHITFIELD

MARCH 18-19

HILLS COMPLETES MX-5 SUPERCUP HAT-TRICK

A stacked grid of almost 50 cars took part in the opening round of the British Racing and Sports Car Club's Mazda MX-5 Supercup, but the spoils all went one way as Aidan Hills secured an impressive clean-sweep of three wins.

Reigning champion Will Blackwell-Chambers topped qualifying to secure pole for the first two races, but bad starts hampered his chances in both.

In race one Hills climbed from the third row to the lead and held off James Cossins and Tom Griffiths by less than a second at the chequered flag.

Hills took a more comfortable triumph in race two, breaking clear of Griffiths and Cossins to win by just under two seconds.

Griffiths climbed from sixth to first during a frenetic opening lap in the partially-reversed grid race three, but a mistake exiting Club left him fighting for second with Hills and allowed Richard Amos to move to the front.

Hills then picked off both Griffiths and Amos, with Blackwell-Chambers fighting his way up to second. Hills withstood late pressure to take his third win ahead of Blackwell-Chambers and Amos.

It was a weekend of mixed fortunes for pre-season favourite Steve Foden in the MX-5 Championship. Hampered by a fuel leak and set-up issues in qualifying, he failed to take the start of the opening encounter after the leak returned.

Thomas Langford recovered

from a late clash with his AB Motorsport team-mate Luke Pullen to win ahead of Brad Jones, while 16-year-old rookie Ted Bradbury took third at the chequered flag after Oliver Graham was awarded a five-second track limits penalty.

Langford again led at the start of a damp race two, but Adam Sparrow soon caught and passed him, eventually going on to record a dominant maiden victory by 8.5s.

With his issue fixed, Foden produced an impressive drive through the field from 27th to pass Langford for second in the closing stages.

The final contest delivered some of the most exciting action with Foden, Tom Smith and Langford squabbling over the lead throughout. And it was Foden who made up somewhat for his issues earlier in the weekend by taking the spoils.

British touring car stars Josh Cook and Jade Edwards made a victorious return to the C1 Endurance Series, sharing the winning Mac Tools Racing entry with Sylvain Rubio in the four-hour enduro.

JW Bird Motorsport duo Philip House and Nick Beaumont had to settle for second despite being strong contenders while Emax Motorsports came up short in its quest to continue its run of victories with third place.

Former BTCC racers also grabbed the headlines in the Mini Challenge, with Jeff Smith prevailing against Nick Padmore to win the opening contest, while Andrew Jordan fended off Aaron Smith in the sequel by a slender 0.360s.



Hills (8) won all the Supercup bouts



BTCC stars Cook and Edwards won enduro

RACE WINNERS

MX-5 Supercup
Races 1, 2 & 3: Aidan Hills

MX-5 Clubman
Race 1: Brad Jones;
Race 2: Oak Richardson

MX-5 Championship
Race 1: Thomas Langford;
Race 2: Adam Sparrow;
Race 3: Steve Foden

C1 Endurance
Mac Tools Racing
Sylvain Rubio/Jade Edwards/
Josh Cook

Mini Challenge – Se7en/Miglia
Race 1: Jeff Smith;
Race 2: Andrew Jordan

Modified Ford
Race 1: Simon Light (Ford
Capri V8);

Race 2: James Allen (Ford
Focus Mk2)

Clubsport Trophy
Liam Crilley (BMW Z4 Coupe)

MODIFIED FORDS



Allen (77) and Light (111) split the Modified wins

Allen makes strong start in Ford contests

Simon Light and James Allen shared the spoils in the Modified Ford races.

At the wheel of his fearsome Capri V8, Light qualified on pole for race one ahead of Stephen Scott-Dunwoodie's Sierra Cosworth and Josh Payton,

surprising on his debut in a striking Cortina Mk2. Light and Scott-Dunwoodie exchanged the lead early on before Allen climbed from eighth on the grid to move ahead of the pair.

Scott-Dunwoodie eventually faded to fourth

behind Lloyd Jameson's Escort Maxi Cosworth, while Light withstood pressure from Allen before pulling clear to win by over 12 seconds.

Rain and fading light threatened to curtail race two, with the cars running

behind the safety car for the first 10 minutes. But it proved an exciting affair when the green flag flew.

Allen built a four-second lead as Jamieson and Scott-Dunwoodie both retired. But the gap was halved late on by Kester Cook, who

fended off a charging Payton to finish second.

"I was nervous until today, but it all seems to have been for nothing," Allen revealed. "We have a good wet set-up as we only ever seem to test in the wet!"

CLUBSPORT TROPHY



Crilley (12) led home a jam-packed Clubsport entry

Crilley dominates in packed Clubsport Trophy

Liam Crilley proved untouchable against a field of almost 60 cars in the Clubsport Trophy season opener.

Lining up from third on the grid in his BMW Z4 Coupe, Crilley's task was made easier after issues for

both front-row starters on the opening lap. Matthew Boulton snatched the lead from polesitter Scott Parkin into Copse, but then spun at Becketts, while Parkin suffered a driveshaft failure with his Audi TTCR.

Crilley took the lead and

soon built a gap to Phiroze Bilimoria's VW Scirocco, making his mandatory pitstop with 10 minutes left of a slightly reduced 40-minute contest.

From there he cruised home 22.1 seconds clear, despite light rain making

the track greasy in the closing stages. James Alford (VW Golf) edged Tom Stanway (BMW 328i) to second by just 0.149s, while Bilimoria, after a short-pitstop penalty, slipped back to fifth behind Simon Horrobin's Fiesta ST240.

"You could smell it in the air," said Crilley of the late rain shower. "It was different every corner, but by the end it was almost dry again. I ran out of fuel in qualifying, so I was a bit nervous towards the end, I was short-shifting."

COLUMNIST

ABBI PULLING



The 20-year-old is eagerly anticipating the new F1 Academy championship

Photos: Alpine, Motorsport Images



Pulling is developing her physical strength



Alpine offers all-round help

I've got a great team around me with Rodin Carlin for the first season of F1 Academy, and I'm on the Alpine Academy, so this year's lining up to be good. I'm really looking forward to it.

Track time is something I've been looking for and this year I'll definitely be getting it. In each F1 Academy meeting there are two 40-minute practice sessions, two 15-minute qualifying sessions and three races: two 30 minutes, one 20 minutes. There's a reversed-grid race in there too, and points for pole position and fastest lap. It's a great format.

The teams involved are Rodin Carlin, ART, MP, Prema and Campos; they go all the way up into FIA Formula 2, so it provides that clear progression path that I'll be looking for. The next step for me is I want to go into FIA Formula 3 so hopefully with Rodin Carlin I can make that happen.

I want to focus on a lot of off-track development. It is something I've done a lot of in the past couple of years and I want to continue that and even more so now that I can work with an engineer I'll keep all year.

I aim to win some races and score quite a few points this year. There are good tracks on the calendar that I'm quite confident at. I'm not going to go in too confident though, I always want to see where I can improve, and the team will help me in that.

One thing that I'm pushing a lot to improve is qualifying. It's something that I lacked in last year, probably a bit down to being inexperienced; it's an area I think I can get better at. I'm quite confident in my

racecraft and everything on track.

Other than that I'll be getting a feel for the car as it's new to me, and hopefully developing the car through the year. The car seems to suit my driving style and it's a fun car to drive.

Rodin Carlin is a lot bigger scale than anything I've ever been used to. In junior categories the team is very established and it has a good structure behind it. In the workshop it has a lot of people in every day and it's great that I can go on the simulator with my engineer. The development that the team provides for drivers is so useful on the junior category ladder.

And it's been quite a long time coming: Carlin and I had a conversation going into my second season of British Formula 4 for me to drive with it, and we've ended up finally crossing paths again so I'm really

looking forward to working with the team.

Any young aspiring driver in my position, male or female, wants to get as close as they can to Formula 1, and there's the progression with Rodin Carlin, it runs cars in F3 up to F2. Obviously a lot of progression is down your budget and partners and things like that, but if I can get there in a couple of years that would be something special.

My ultimate ambition is to race in F1, but if that doesn't happen I'm keeping my options open to anything. All motorsport is fun and there's a reason why there's so many different forms of it: endurance, rallycross, go karting and I'd love to try a rally one day. If it was to happen where I needed to crossover to endurance racing then I'd happily do it.

I am also now a member of the Alpine F1 team's Academy, having been an affiliate last year. I actually first talked to Alpine early in my single-seater career; my mentor Alice Powell introduced me back in 2020 in my first season of F4. And from there I kept going to the gym every now and again and kept talking to Alpine, and it kept an eye on me. I can't thank it enough for the support that it's given me.

I'm at the gym every morning and Alpine is helping me develop my physical strength plus gives me support on the technical side. Throughout the year I'll also be in Alpine's Ops Room – its race weekend mission control – and the team will provide me with support in other areas. I've just come back from my training camp, and I did it last year so you can gauge the progression you've made. It's just an all-round positive support system that Alpine gives to develop us as best as it can.



Pulling was a W Series frontrunner last season

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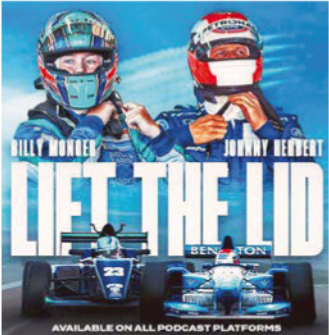
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WHAT'S ON

PODCAST REVIEW



Herbert and Monger talk F1

Lift the Lid With Johnny Herbert and Billy Monger
It is a matter of regret for fans that Johnny Herbert is no longer part of Sky Sports F1's television line-up. But you can still hear his take on all matters Formula 1 as he's just launched a regular podcast called Lift the Lid with fellow racer-pundit Billy Monger. The pair's friendship began when Herbert was one of Monger's first hospital visitors

after the youngster's mammoth Donington Park accident, and they share experience of having come through a life-changing crash. Their similarities don't end there, as they both bring accessibility and irreverence familiar from their TV punditry – and the pair indeed bounce off each other well – yet they combine this with authority and detail and they don't shirk weighty issues. The podcast series has

two weekly shows: one exploring latest F1 matters; the other a fans' Q&A. Herbert and Monger offer their rich experience to explore F1's past, present and future: in the first episodes you find out about, among other things, the 1999 F1 car with no slipstream, and why Monger thinks Ollie Bearman is the future. Lift the Lid can be downloaded from all major podcast distributors.

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

If you don't catch this Saturday's Formula E race from Sao Paulo when it's shown live, Channel 4 shows its highlights following morning at 0830hrs-0930hrs. And if you want to warm yourself up for it, tomorrow (Friday) you have a few chances to watch the preceding FE round from Cape Town on Eurosport 2, first at 1210hrs-1310hrs, while today there are chances on the same channel to watch the round that preceded that, from Hyderabad. Sky Sports F1 meanwhile on Monday starts to build us up for

next weekend's latest Australian Grand Prix, with some classic down under races. It shows the sodden 1989 encounter at 2100hrs-2230hrs, followed immediately by highlights of the 1987 race at 2230hrs-2300hrs. Then on Tuesday again from 2100hrs there's highlights of the 1994, '96 and '90 Australian GPs. Viaplay Sports gets us in the mood for this weekend's Circuit of the Americas NASCAR race, that stars Jenson Button and Kimi Raikkonen, with highlights of the previous Atlanta round. It's on Viaplay Sports 2 today at



The 1989 Aussie GP on TV

1500hrs-1600hrs, and it's shown a few times tomorrow. You can also catch Australian Supercars' recently season-opening Newcastle double header on BT Sport 4. It's shown tomorrow, first in the early hours from 0015hrs then from 1345hrs.

LIVE TV

Formula E
Sao Paulo
Race: Saturday, 1630hrs-1835hrs, Eurosport 2

Ferrari Challenge
Valencia
Race 1: Saturday, 1320hrs-1420hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race 2: Sunday, 1320hrs-1420hrs, Sky Sports F1

NASCAR
Circuit of the Americas
Race: Sunday, 2000hrs-0030hrs, Viaplay Sports 2

LISTINGS

RACING SATURDAY
■ **Kirkistown, N Ireland**
500MRCI meeting: Road Sports, Fiestas, FF1600, Saloon/GT, Mazda MX-5s, 7evens Series Starts racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Admission adult £15 Web kirkistown.co.uk

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
■ **Snetterton 300, Norfolk**
CSCC meeting: Morgans, Tin Tops, Swinging Sixties, Future Classics, Magnificent 7s, Modern Classics, Special Saloon and Modsports, Classic K, New Millennium, Open Series, Turbo Tin Tops, Slicks Series Starts Saturday, racing from 1255hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1250hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Admission adult £15, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422
■ **Silverstone GP, Northants**
BARC meeting: British Endurance, Britcar Trophy, Britcar Prototype Cup, Super Tourers, Pre '66 Classic Touring Cars, Pre '83 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre 2003 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic Thunder, Jaguar Challenge Starts Saturday, racing from 1305hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs Admission £17 Web silverstone.co.uk Tickets online only

RALLYING SATURDAY
■ **Rally North Wales**
Wolverhampton and South Staffs CC (spectators admitted) Web rallynorthwales.co.uk
■ **Memorial Garden Stages Rally, Condon**
Condon Motor Sports Club (no spectators) Web condonmsc.co.uk

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EDITORIAL
Editor: Matt James
Tel: 07884 117139
Email: Matt.James@kelsey.co.uk

Deputy Editor: Graham Keilloh
Tel: 07973 829291
Email: Graham.Keilloh@kelsey.co.uk

Rallies-Historics Editor: Paul Lawrence
Tel: 07778 547918
Email: paul@tfmpublishing.com

Art Editor: Mike Stokoe
Tel: 07957 282340
Email: mikestokoe@gmail.com

Contributors
Rallycross Editor: Hal Ridge
Columnist at large: David Addison
Columnist and track tester: Andrew Jordan

ADVERTISING
Director: David Lerpiniere
Tel: 01732 445326
Email: david@talkmediasales.co.uk

Sales Director: Russell Bedford
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Ad Manager: Natalie Harman
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PRODUCTION
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Customer service and subscription postal address: Motorsport News Customer Service Team Kelsey Publishing Ltd Kelsey Media, The Granary, Downs Court Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone Kent ME18 6AL

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David Harbey went to the recent circuit rally at Donington Park, the Dukeries event



Richard Salisbury braved conditions



Elliot Payne, photographed by Dean Chilvers



Alex Whitmore captured a snowy Donington



Adrien Fourmaux pushes, from Chris Collier

NEXT EDITION

OUT THURSDAY, MARCH 30

EXCLUSIVE READERS' Q&A: SCOTT MORAN



We put the MN questions to the king of hillclimbing

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